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LAST ISSUE

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-155 *9 August 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Condemns Iranian 'Aggression' in Iraq

NC0808204496 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab League General Secretariat has condemned Iran's attack on Iraqi territories on 26, 27, and 28 July and the shelling of some civilian areas, which killed innocent Iraqi citizens and caused enormous damage to Iraqi civilian property. The Arab League General Secretariat issued a statement today in which it confirmed that this unjustified aggression is considered a violation of the provisions of the UN Charter and the principles of international law. This requires that Iran withdraw its troops immediately from Iraqi territory and stop these activities, which violate the principles of good-neighborliness between Iran and the Arab countries.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th—PA Has Detailed Timeframe for Hebron Redeployment

TA0808153096 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 7 Aug 96 p 8

[Report by Muhammad Abu-Khudayr and Zaki Abu-al-Halawah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem — Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation, has rejected renegotiation on Hebron and has called on the Israeli authorities to meet their commitments and redeploy in the city as soon as possible.

Sha'th told AL-QUDS that the Israeli Government's positions are proof of procrastination, a waste of time, and the acceleration of its settlement policy. He warned that this policy will destroy the peace process.

He added that the Palestinian position is clear. The world will soon discover who is seeking to throw sand in people's eyes and endeavoring — in practice — to nip the peace process in the bud.

He stressed that the policy of accelerating settlement expansion in the Palestinian territories will lead to confrontation and the destruction of the entire peace process. The world must realize this danger.

Sha'th disclosed the existence of a detailed Palestinian plan for the timeframe of the Israeli army's redeployment from Hebron. The plan is being discussed by the Palestinian Council of Ministers.

On a different level, Sha'th denied that Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu- Mazin), secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, had agreed that Jerusalem would remain united under Israeli sovereignty provided the Palestinians are given Abu-Dis. He added that such reports are just trial balloons floated by the Labor Party at one time and the Likud at another.

Sha'th explained that as far as the Palestinian National Authority [PA] is concerned, Jerusalem is a red line. Neither our friends nor our enemies should ignore our rights in Jerusalem, which we cannot renounce.

Ahmad Quray' (Abu-'Ala'), speaker of the Legislative Council, said that Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's statements on Hebron represent a return to square one. Furthermore, there will be no peace with settlement activity.

Abu-'Ala' emphasized that it is not possible to renegotiate the Hebron redeployment. He said that agreement on redeployment was reached after eight months of difficult negotiations and that it is impossible to return to square one.

He added that such Israeli statements are meaningless. The Israeli side should adhere to what has been agreed and redeploy from Hebron as soon as possible.

Abu-'Ala' emphasized that the Palestinian side categorically rejects renegotiating issues on which agreement has been reached.

He said that in the wake of the recent incidents, the Palestinian people are tense. This tension must be allayed and addressed calmly.

Palestinian Affairs: Minister Denies Israeli Easing of Security Cordon

JN0808155496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1150 GMT 8 Aug 96

[Telephone interview with Jamil al-Tarifi, minister of civilian affairs in the PA by unidentified correspondent; place not given; from "Today's Events" program — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Good evening, Mr. Minister.

[Al-Tarifi] Good evening.

[Correspondent] Israeli officials at crossing points and military checkpoints deliberately provoke and mistreat Palestinian officials and citizens. How will you deal with this?

[Al-Tarifi] These practices are part of a policy adopted by the Israeli Government to violate the agreements constantly. As you said, there are continued provocations against citizens and senior Palestinian officials. You and

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the listeners recall what happened to brother 'Abbas Zaki, when something similar to kidnapping occurred at an area in which the Israelis are absolutely not allowed to be present. That area is a safe passage between the bridge and the Palestinian Authority's [PA] area in Jericho. Such reckless behavior was also repeated by members of the border police at the Erez checkpoint with brother Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] and Muhammad Dahlan. There are other incidents. Of course, the Israeli side tells us that it will investigate the issue. However, I believe this policy is planned by the Israeli Government to obstruct PA activities. For example, we agreed with them that PA officials can go to and from Gaza and the West Bank easily and that giving them permits is routine, and all we have to do is to get permits for those officials. However, we were surprised that a certain number of officials was designated for a number of days and hours. Regrettably, this obstructs the work of the PA. The main problem with the Israeli side, as you and everyone else know, is that there really are no negotiations between us and them to present these issues to them so that they will hold low-level officials accountable.

[Correspondent] How will you address this issue promptly?

[Al-Tarifi] We call them on the telephone immediately and send them messages. We also hold some urgent meetings with them to inform them about what is happening. They sometimes try to belittle the importance of these incidents, saying they will hold accountable the ones who do such things.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister: What about permits needed to go to and from West Bank governorates and Gaza governorates, especially since there are humanitarian cases that require quick access?

[Al-Tarifi] Of course, the main reason for this problem is that no agreement was reached on the safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The agreement is practically almost ready to be signed. However, the Israeli political decisionmakers are obstructing this. As for the permits, as I have mentioned in earlier statements, the Israeli Government claims that it eased the security cordon. This is untrue and a sheer fabrication. There are humanitarian cases for which permits must be ready, such as doctors who work in Jerusalem.

[Correspondents] Also journalists.

[Al-Tarifi] Yes, journalists, doctors, water officials, traders, electricity company officials, teachers who work in Jerusalem. All of them suffer from this problem. This also applies to a Palestinian citizen who lives in Gaza but whose wife comes from Nabulus or Hebron. When a Palestinian citizen wants to go from Gaza to Jordan, how can he go and which road will he take to the bridge? Also, when a citizen wants to return, how can he do that? They claim to have facilitated all of these issues, but in reality there are no facilities. I want to assert to our Palestinian citizen that all the alleged Israeli facilities, the last of which was that Netanyahu announced at his news conference in Jordan that there are 5,000 more workers, are not true. There has been no easing of the security cordon so far.

[Correspondent] So the Israeli side is fully responsible for this.

[Al-Tarifi] Yes, the Israeli side is fully responsible. This is in addition to the many daily violations of the agreement. The Israeli Government is still divided and has not yet named an Israeli delegation to negotiate with the Palestinian side on the implementation of the interim agreement.

[Correspondent] In your opinion, for how long will this situation continue?

[Al-Tarifi] I hope it will not continue for long. This is because we constantly apply pressure. The PA is telling the whole world about the real position of the Israeli Government.

[Correspondent] Mr. Jamil al-Tarifi, minister of civilian affairs, thank you for these clarifications.

[Al-Tarifi] You are welcome.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Secret' Security Unit Spying On Possible Coup Stagers

TA0908090696 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 9 Aug 96 p 21

[Article by Nadav Ha'etzni: "His Throne Is Beginning To Totter"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A secret security body known as Amn al-Khas has been operating for over a year under Yasir 'Arafat's rule. It joins some 10 other security organizations operating on behalf of the Palestinian government, ranging from Jibril al-Rujub's Amn al-Wiqa'i to Amin al-Hindi and Tawfiq Tirawi's Mukhabarat.

Recently 'Arafat decided to revitalize the semisecret body. He raised the salaries of employees and assigned them a single key task: to spy on all the other security bodies operating under him. On his behalf, Amn al-Khas officers snoop around in the murky waters of their colleagues to find out whether any of them is talking about toppling the president.

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It is not clear whether the new mission is based on solid information about plans to stage a coup or stems from 'Arafat's ceaseless paranoia. However, there is no doubt that the PLO chairman has recently been given good reasons to worry about the longevity of his rule. The events of the last two weeks could be the first signs of the collapse and decline of the Palestinian Authority [PA].

The PA's greased propaganda machinery was set in action early this week in a bid to blur and distort the circumstances of the rioting in Tulkarm over the weekend. It was hard to conceal the dramatic images screened around the world, which looked like a budding popular uprising, or intifadah, a word more familiar to us. However, the PA managed to instill in many journalists the distorted feeling that the riots had been a provocation stirred by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. [passage omitted]

The affair of the office opened by Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir in East Jerusalem ended in a whimper on Tuesday, with all the sides trying to save face. However, the grotesque showdown around 'Abd-al-Qadir's home revealed a noteworthy new phenomenon. As far as is known, this is the first time that a Palestinian Council member and one of the main pillars of the Fatah establishment said no to 'Arafat in public. Time after time 'Arafat and his envoys phoned 'Abd-al-Qadir demanding, threatening, pleading, and begging him to stop his protest. But he dug in his heels.

Last Friday he eventually turned down 'Arafat's demand to meet him in Jericho, admitting to his close supporters that he was afraid of being arrested by al-Rujub. He then proceeded to ignore Ramzi Khuri, the director of 'Arafat's office, and finally also Faysal al-Husayni, his mentor.

Al-Husayni called on 'Abd-al-Qadir on Sunday, closeted himself with him inside the house, and started screaming "the boss is telling you to stop. You have embarrassed him, enough is enough!" But 'Abd-al-Qadir would not desist. He noticed that not even one of his colleagues (the Jerusalem District representatives in the Palestinian Council), dared come to his house to express their support, but he was heartened by the support of hundreds of hardcore Fatah members who squatted on the floor, cursing the PA and its chief. A whole generation of Fatah youths, members of the al- Shabibah Youth Movement in the refugee camps, women's organizations, and field activists came to express their support and tell him: "At long last a man with balls has stepped forward." Fatah even issued a leaflet containing unrestrained criticism of 'Arafat's rule.

Although slogans hailed the struggle against the government of Eytan and Sharon, private talks centered on the corruption and oppression in the PA areas. Once again, just as in Tulkarm, they were letting off steam that had been accumulating for a long time.

Tempers began to calm down toward the weekend. 'Arafat sent reinforcements to Tulkarm, held a summary trial for the murderers of Mahmud al-Jumayyil, and temporarily contained the storm. However, were I an insurance agent, I would not insure Yasir 'Arafat's government for all the money in the world.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Zahhar — Contacts With PA on Prisoner Release Ongoing

TA0808165996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1430 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, spokesman for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], has said that contacts are under way with the Palestinian Authority [PA] to secure the release of Hamas prisoners in Palestinian jails detained in the wake of the Tulkarm and Nabulus incidents. Dr. al-Zahhar added that the release of these detainees will contribute to improving the climate between the PA and Hamas.

Our correspondent Hasan Abu-Zayid reports that Dr. al-Zahhar said that leading Hamas figures from the Gaza Strip who visited the West Bank met with Hamas leaders there and were briefed about the situation in the West Bank in the wake of the Tulkarm and Nabulus events.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Mediation in West Bank Unrest Viewed

TA0908105696 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 9 Aug 96 p 2

[Report by Jon Immanuel]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Gaza Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leaders went to Tulkarm this week to mediate between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority [PA], after PA police shot a Hamas activist dead in clashes there last Friday [2 August].

The security services decided to allow the Hamas representatives to travel from Gaza to Tulkarm after PA President Yasir 'Arafat expressed concern about the worsening situation in the West Bank, following the torture death of a prison inmate in Nabulus and the Tulkarm shooting.

The use of Hamas officials to calm down a potentially dangerous situation indicates heightened cooperation between the PA and Hamas in Gaza, and an Israeli

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admission that Hamas is more than a terror group to be crushed. It also is a government gesture to 'Arafat, to show that it is not bent on his downfall, as some officials in the PA believe.

Hamas in Gaza was conspicuously not involved in protests or threats against the PA, after police shot the activist dead during a raid by Islamic activists on the Tulkarm jail. In return for its services as a responsible mediator, it will undoubtedly demand the release of up to 600 Hamas prisoners, who are being held in PA jails without charges since the February-March suicide bombing attacks. [passage omitted]

Israeli Islamic leader Ibrahim Darwish met with 'Arafat yesterday, and the two discussed the future of the peace process. Darwish also called for the release of Hamas detainees being held without charges.

Palestinian Affairs: Gaza Factions Issue Statement Calling For Closing Ranks

TA0808171396 Ramallah AL-BILAD in Arabic 7 Aug 96 p 3

[Report by Mahir Farraj]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza — National and Islamic factions in Gaza issued a statement to the masses yesterday in which they called for closing ranks, mobilizing potential, and entrenching democracy as the basis for building Palestinian civilian society and as an alternative to resolving differences by violence which, according to the statement, will only cause our people more damage and sedition from which the Israeli occupation benefits.

In a joint statement, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Arab Liberation Front, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and the Islamic Jihad emphasized the need to decisively resist the Likud government's new policy, epitomized by lifting the restrictions on settlement activity, encroaching upon al-Aqsa Mosque, and giving the herds of settlers a free hand to steal more Palestinian land, whether under the pretext of building bypass roads, expanding settlements, or searching for ancient Jewish relics.

The statement said that amid this complex situation, we find that some of the Authority's organs are continuing their irresponsible practices against the sons of our people.

In reference to the recent incidents in Tulkarm and Nabulus, the statement noted that these practices violate human rights and freedom of demonstration and expression.

The statement by the Palestinian national and Islamic factions emphasized several points, most important of which are:

— It is forbidden to shed Palestinian blood and fire on citizens regardless of the reasons.

— All political prisoners in the Authority's jails must be released. Political detention is forbidden.

— All forms of violence and torture against political prisoners must be stopped.

— Democratic freedoms must be provided and human rights and freedom of expression respected.

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Algeria

Algeria: Party Calls For Abrogation of Article 2 of Constitution

LD0808134596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Liamine Zeroual today received a delegation of the Ettahadi Mouvement [the party for progress, modernity, and democracy; formerly called the Socialist Vanguard Party] led by its leader, Hashemi Cherif. [passage omitted] Following the meeting, Mr. Cherif made the following statement:

[Begin Cherif recording] Let us say that there has been relative progress, but no agreement has yet been reached regarding basic issues of principle. What matters is that the talks lasted for three hours, and this means that the dialogue was deep and serious. Both sides listened to each other, and this is very important. We have further stressed our views in respect of the need to change or to amend the constitution on fundamental issues, such as the national identity, separation between religion and politics, including either the abolition or the amendment of Article 2 of the constitution, which says that Islam is the religion of the state. We are saying that Article 2 is the pillar used by all the Islamist and conservative forces to strike at the democratic, republican, and modernist nature of the Algerian state.

Therefore, our response to the call for participation in a national conference, or even in the work of committees, is closely linked to the extent of the government's response to the sensitive problems we have raised. Our response will be given in a few days time, and perhaps after more talks with the president. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Algeria: Opposition Leader Comments on Talks With Government

LD0808145496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Bilateral talks are continuing. The president of the republic received the secretary general of Ettahadi this morning. Hashemi Cherif made the following statement after the meeting:

[Begin Cherif recording] Let us say that there has been some progress on both sides, but there are still differences. In any case, our differences have to do with two issues.

We still believe that it is of the utmost importance that Article 2 of the constitution should be abolished or amended in such a way that there should be a clear and radical separation between political and religious affairs. This is vital for the future of the Algerian state. That is not yet the opinion of the authorities, although one seems to glimpse possibilities for a development, but I am saying this with reservations, it is for the authorities to make a statement on this issue.

A second difference has to do with the process that must lead to general elections by the second half of 1997. We believe that the constitution should first be amended, the present political establishment should be taken over by a new political establishment that would comply better to the planned democratic, republican, and modern framework, and those democratic forces that are not organized in society should be given the time to get organized. That cannot be done until terrorism has been wiped out totally. [end recording]

Regarding the commissions that the presidency has proposed setting up to discuss contentious issues, Mr. Cherif had reservations: Ettahadi will soon announce its stance.

Algeria: Article Examines Actions by Opposition Parties

LD0808201796 Algiers LA NATION in French 23 Jul 96 p 5

[Article by Abed Charef: "The Infernal Machine — The Opposition Is Speaking on Behalf of the Authorities and the Authorities Have Turned On an Infernal Machine Which Will Help Them Impose Their Own Choices. The Opposition Does Not Have Much Room for maneuver and it Can Only Lose, Whatever the Scenario. Can it, However, Resign Itself to This?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The authorities have a somewhat strange way of announcing their projects: They rely on the statements made by the leaders of the so-called opposition. The abundance of revelations emanating from opposition circles which are very close to the authorities make up, to a large extent, for the silence of the presidency and the prime minister and the impenetrable nature of their approach. These circles are so close to the authorities that Noureddine Boukrouh [leader of the Party of Algerian Renewal] finds a huge similarity between his program and that of [President] Liamine Zeroual.

This method of communication was again confirmed this week. It was Noureddine Boukrouh, in a television interview, who first gave details of the contacts between the opposition and President Zeroual, held within the framework of the multilateral talks. Then it was Abdelkader Merbah, leader of a faction of the Algerian Movement for Justice and Development [MAJD] of the late Kasdi Merbah, who first expressed the wishes of some circles within the regime by publicly asking for

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the resignation of Ahmed Ouyahia's government. This deputy has suddenly discovered the virtues of freedom of speech and the need to open up the political and media landscapes, after taking part and playing a minor role in the system for four years.

It is therefore very tempting to say that Abdelkader Merbah is expressing the will of one part of the system, particularly as he is not known as a man who takes initiatives on his own, let alone running the risk of venturing onto democratic terrain about which he knows so little. On "automatic pilot" (if we can use this expression at a time when Air Algerie is on strike), Merbah and Boukrouh are defining in fact the first concessions which some circles within the regime are prepared to accept in exchange for a proper packaging of the national conference due to be held in August or September. In other words, when these two men speak, they are unofficially saying how far the authorities will go without allowing these statements to become formal commitments by which the authorities can be bound.

This fact finds its explanation in the very existence of the opposition. Most parties were created at the instigation of some circles within the regime, which were aiming to achieve two goals. They could control an opposition created on their own initiative and, on the other hand, they could discredit an opposition which is not very representative and which is quite happy just staying on the fringes of the regime. If a party is not created at the instigation of these circles within the regime, it is always possible to bring it into line by using the carrot and stick approach.

This is not new either. During the first contacts about the memorandum, the contents of this document were disclosed point by point by the "opposition representatives" who went, one after the other, to the presidency of the republic. In 1994, the holding of presidential elections was announced by Said Saadi [leader of the Rally for Culture and Democracy, RCD] before Liamine Zeroual himself did.

This phenomenon, which consists of letting the opposition parties announce the intentions of the authorities, is interesting in more ways than one. It reveals first of all the parties which are in synchronization with the authorities at any given time. By extension, and knowing these parties, we can discover the viewpoints of the circles on whose behalf they are speaking.

Thus we can say, without much risk of being mistaken, that if Noureddine Boukrouh is tied down, now more than ever before, by the authorities, especially the presidency, by contrast the authorities have "lost," at least for the moment, the RCD. The latter has expressed its clear opposition to Liamine Zeroual's memorandum and has made numerous statements in this respect. We can even go further and say that some circles within the regime, of which the RCD is the open expression, are opposed to Liamine Zeroual's project because it threatens to give the head of state too many powers, which will certainly be at their expense.

The other conclusion which can be drawn from the latest statements is that the authorities have failed to gain wide support [within the opposition]. By finding only a fraction [as published] of the MAJD to express some of their wishes, they have shown that they have not got much choice among their interlocutors. They do not worry either about looking for political parties or credible figures to make allies out of them. This leads naturally to another question linked to the present situation: who is Abdelkader Merbah [leader of MAJD] working for and why is he asking for the dismissal of the current government team in favour of a government of national unity?

Apparently, the demand for a government of national unity, which would lead the country to the forthcoming major political events, can have positive effects with a view to giving greater support to Liamine Zeroual's initiative and ensuring a wider participation by political parties and associations, and as a result the population.

However, this positive vision is a mere illusion because it does not correspond to the nature of the system, which has proved that it does not need supporters to impose its own approach nor the way it operates. The fact of the matter is that when the demands of the opposition become too costly in democratic terms, the regime [French: le Pouvoir] can go it alone.

It is difficult to imagine how some parties, especially the major ones, can accept entering the government under the current circumstances. This is what gives Abdelkader Merbah's demand [for the dismissal of the current government] its true meaning: An offer is made to those who want to back the authorities in their approach, in exchange for ministerial posts. The offer is straight, open, and very clear. It is confirmed by persistent rumors about a change of government.

The traditional sources of such rumours are insisting on the details saying, among other things, that the prime minister has not met the head of state for two months except in official meetings such as councils of ministers. Conflicts between ministers are, for their part, public. They are exposed by the members of the government themselves and we wonder how these officials can cohabit within the same executive and hold meetings saying that they are applying the same programme, when they evidently have nothing in common. Some

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ministers will resign and others will be dismissed, according to the same sources.

Mahfoud Nahna's party, the Islamic Society Movement [ISM], who learned a great deal from his recent experiences during which he has realized that his presence in the government [through secretary of state for agriculture and fisheries, Bouguerra Soltani] has no political impact, does not seem to be in much of a hurry to reply to the invitation. Some in the governing body of this party are saying that a government change, which would put an end to the presence of ISM within the executive, would be received with relief. ISM is not satisfied with the policy which is forced upon it, all for the sake of government solidarity, but it is not the sort of party that would slam the door, especially when it is a door which leads to the anteroom of power.

As regards the National Libertion Front [FLN], the leading figures close to [Secretary General] Boualem Benhamouda are becoming somewhat impatient. If the secretary general is showing some self- control, the now-famous Abderrahmane Belayat, Djamel Ould Abbas, and Sadek Bouguettaya are fidgeting impatiently and think that their contribution to the downfall of Abdelhamid Mehri [former FLN secretary-general] has not yet been rewarded.

According to our sources, these people could expect a rather big disappointment, because the only mission they have been entrusted with is to lead the FLN to bankruptcy and this seems to have already been achieved. The indefinite postponement of the FLN congress has destroyed the remaining dynamism and militancy within the party, and the only job for those who have brought Boualem Benhamouda to lead the FLN is to continue their action to remove the little credibility left in the old FLN house. In any case, it is difficult to envisage how the authorities could accept the most loathsome face of the FLN within their fold. The authorities will agree only to see this party represented at the [national concord] conference, in whatever form, in order to improve the figures on the participation and the number of those who support Liamine Zeroual's project.

Thus, the opposition finds itself cornered. Not by its weak proposals but by the implacable logic introduced by the authorities. Abdallah Djaballah, the leader of Ennahda, admits this in an interview with the weekly EL HOURRIA. After having learnt his lesson from the presidential elections [16 November 1995], he says that the parties which had chosen to boycott those elections had put the country's interests before their own. These parties have lost ground and are trailing behind the machine which was then turned on and they cannot afford a second boycott because, in any case, the authorities will not take it into account.

This is the dilemma facing a number of parties, such as the Socialist Forces Front. Do they have to take part, even if they serve or are used to back the legalization of an authoritarian project? Do they have to take part and try to put their views across, even if they have no illusions about the determination of the authorities to bring their own project to a successful conclusion? Or do they have to take part knowing full well that the authorities will stick to their own choices at the risk of appearing, yet again, as parties with negative attitudes clinging to democratic positions?

Mouloud Hamrouche [prime minister in late 1980's and leader of one of the FLN factions], before the presidential elections [of November 1995], declared that the authorities had locked all the doors, leaving open only those which lead to bad solutions. However, wrecking bad solutions could lead to even more dangerous situations. Today, the same scenario is repeating itself. What choice is there left for the opposition?

Algeria: FIS Leader Rejects 'Blind Violence'

MM0808153696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 8 Aug 96 p 6

[Interview with Abdallah Anas, member of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) Executive Committee, by Camille al-Tawil in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Tawil] What is the FIS' position toward President Liamine Zeroual's declaration of the "closure of the Salvation Front dossier"?

[Anas] It is wrong to deal with the question of the FIS as being a mere dossier which the Algerian Ministry of the Interior has the right to open or close as it pleases. The FIS is in fact the Algerian people, who have for the past five years been confronting the coupists and who have so far paid with 80,000 dead in addition to thousands of detainees.

The events that have been taking place since 1992 show that the Algerian regime has been facing not a party but a people. We affirm that there will never be any stability in Algeria without the FIS, whatever efforts the government may exert.

The past five years should have been enough for the Algerian military regime to prove whether it has it in its power to survive the ordeal. But events have proved it a failure. We wish to recall in this respect the message sent by Shaykh Ali Benhadj — may God end his captivity — to General Zeroual pledging that, if he and the other FIS leaders were released, he would

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resolve the problem within two months. This challenge is still there: The FIS is capable, after Almighty God, of ending the problem in Algeria.

[Al-Tawil] Do you mean that the FIS was in a position to talk and negotiate with the regime on behalf of the opposition? What about the Armed Islamic Group [GIA] and the other groups in the central regions ?

[Anas] There are two kinds of opposition. The first is that of the parties' opposition, between whom and the Front there is a coordination and so there is no problem in this respect. But if you mean by the opposition the other type of opposition, namely, the "Armed Group", that has ended. The FIS remains the only number in the equation, and no stability can be attained without it.

[Al-Tawil] Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the Algerian government went ahead today and released the FIS leaders and permitted them to meet with the leaders in the field. Do you not think that its acceptance would be incomplete without the release of the GIA? Do you not think that matters are now out of FIS hands?

[Anas] That is impossible. The FIS is still the first and only factor, after Almighty God, that is capable of ending the crisis and the restoration of stability and security. True, the government's problem with the GIA will take some time to deal with, because it is shrouded in some confusion, but in the end stability will come at the hands of the FIS. The experiences of the past five years have proved this for a fact.

[Al-Tawil] It has been reported that some FIS responsible officials could participate in the national accord conference.

[Anas] It is a fact well known to all, inside and outside Algeria, that the sole and legitimate leadership which can decide matters pertaining to the FIS consists of Shaykh Abbasi Madani and Ali Benhadj, may God end their captivity. They are represented outside Algeria by the Executive Committee (headed by Rabah Kebir) and inside Algeria by the shaykhs who have been released from detention. At the mujahidin level they are represented by the Islamic Salvation Army [AIS]. Thus any participation in the conference without authority from the leadership would not be considered representative of the FIS.

[Al-Tawil] What is the FIS' position toward the conference itself and its possible call for the amendment of the Constitution prior to the legislative elections?

[Anas] One of the most prominent justifications that Gen. Zeroual cites for a[mending the current Constitution states that the constitution was adopted (in February 1989) under extraordinary conditions (after the 1988 disturbances). But we reply to that by saying that, if the major flaw in the 1989 Constitution was that it was promulgated under extraordinary conditions, then the current political, security, and economic conditions of Algeria today are no better than the conditions that prevailed in 1989. Are the conditions in Algeria today normal? Some 80,000 people have been killed, and the parties are opposed to the amendment of the Constitution. In whose interest will the Constitution be amended today? The amendment will only serve the interests of the men of the regime.

As to our position vis-a-vis the national conference, we believe the conference will contribute nothing whatsoever to the efforts being exerted to resolve the problem. Because the conference will be convening on the basis of a memorandum put forward by the (Algerian) leadership. It is a memorandum which was opposed by the majority of the parties, some of which have gone to the extent of describing the consultations held concerning the memorandum as being consultations between the regime and itself. This is because almost 80 percent of the personalities consulted belonged to the regime itself. Consequently, this means that the resolutions of the national conference will fail to resolve the crisis just as the previous resolutions that emanated from one side of the Algerian equation, namely the military authority, have failed.

[Al-Tawil] For some time we have been noticing some differences in the positions of responsible FIS officials toward the crisis. What is the FIS' official position toward the Algerian regime?

[Anas] It is only natural for differences of opinion to take place, indeed they even occur within a single family consisting of a father and a mother. There is nothing wrong in that, particularly in an organization of such a size as the FIS facing such major problems.

I wish to point out that the FIS is based on consultation. As long as consultation exists, then differences of views are bound to emerge, otherwise decisions would be unilateral, and this is not the basis on which the FIS was founded. Decisions of destiny are always taken throught agreement within the FIS framework. True opinions may differ during the meetings, but when decisions are taken, all abide by them.

Let me give you some examples: Many of the Islamic action leaders opposed the decision to form the Front and enter the field of politics. But when the FIS leaders met, they came out with the decision to establish the Front and all the founding members went along with that decision. The same thing happened in 1990. Many conflicting views arose over the question of the municipal elections. But the FIS ended with a unified

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decision by which all abided. The same thing also happened in respect of the 1991 peaceful strike with regard to staging it and then ending it. Numerous views were uttered at the FIS Consultative Council concerning the strike, but the final decision was issued unanimously.

[Al-Tawil] But, as we recall, the first split within the FIS took place at that particular time, when a number of the Consultative Council members openly opposed the strike, such as Bechir Faqih and Ahmad Marani. [names as transliterated]

[Anas] But these people were present when the Consultative Council adopted the decision to declare a strike. This means that they left not because of the strike but for some other reasons.

[Al-Tawil] Then you consider the FIS united. Is that so?

[Anas] The Front is unified, as is evident from the fact that the quarters who decide matters are the four I have just mentioned earlier. We have not heard of the existence of a fifth quarter coming out to say that it talks in the name of the Front.

[Al-Tawil] What is the FIS' position toward the regime?

[Anas] The FIS had sent out several messages in the past few months offering to work toward resolving the crisis and ending the massacre of the people. But the regime refused to respond. The FIS position now is that it will continue with its resistance until the Islamic Shari'a rules people's lives.

[Al-Tawil] Reports coming from Algeria speak of an improvement in the security conditions there. What do you say about these reports? Do you think that the government will be able to resolve the question of security in the country?

[Anas] We call on public opinion inside and outside Algeria to count the number of operations that took place during last month, just so as to ascertain whether what Algerian officials and the regime's information media have stated about an improvement in the security conditions were true or not. A quick survey of the operations will show whether security has prevailed or not. The government is unable to find a security solution for the crisis. Had it been really capable of doing so, it would have done it during the past five years.

[Al-Tawil] How does the FIS view the developments taking place in the field of armed action following the killing of the "Armed Group" commander and the reported emergence of new groupings in the central areas?

[Anas] The FIS believes that the people should continue their resistance to oppression, dictatorship, and despotism until the establishment of God's laws in Algeria. Our plan aims at the establishment of an Islamic State. There are different methods for legitimate resistance. Some express their resistance with words, others with their pens, and still others with their guns.

The FIS' resistance is governed by the bounds of religious laws. The FIS has set itself strict limits, and any quarter exceeding those limits will face condemnation. These strict limits include blind violence represented by the killing of women, children, and foreigners for no valid reason and the planting of explosives in public places. In this context, the AIS has nothing but praise for Mustapha Kertali (Commander of Al-Arbaa [as transliterated] [Wednesday] group, who split from the GIA toward the beginning of this year) and see no excessiveness in his views.

[Al-Tawil] You seem to differentiate between the GIA and Kertali's group. Is that not so?

[Anas] The FIS deals with these groups according to their methods. If it finds that their resistance has been legitimate and falls within the framework of self-defense and the protection of sanctities, without excessiveness, it welcomes them. But if it sees that their fight was turned against the people on the pretext that this person shaves his beard and that person listens to music, then the FIS will not agree, as it does not approve of making light of the Jihad.

Algeria: FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS0808122696 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 6 Aug 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by the Islamic Salvation Front "supporters in Europe" — quotation marks as received; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Editorial: The military regime unidirectional policies!

A war without images has been "burning" Algeria since the military coup d'Etat of January 1992 which has set up the "everything goes" policy against the winners of the free popular choice. It is a coup d'Etat because the team that illegally took over power had its own different way of dealing with civilians who "dream taking power from the military" be it by 100% favourable votes.

The policy, the team had concerning the Islamists who won the elections "fair and square", was simply barbaric. The repression which immediately followed the coup was the real trigger of a war which five years and more than 80,000 lost lives latter, [as received] has not said

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its last word yet. It is still important to restate when ever possible the above historical fact because what is reported about the tragic events in Algeria, often tends to suggest that the actual conflict came from nowhere nor does it has any historical reference.

Today, the military regime in Algeria is trying to convince the political class that it is possible to build a stable Algeria with a long lasting peace on the top of this "historical heritage" and on the top of this ravaging war. One must say today and before heavy "propaganda smokes" are launched to intoxicate the public opinion to back up the regime project, that this kind of approach will only plunge Algeria further into chaos. This must also be said during the coming "intoxication period" and reminded of when time will prove that the regime has never had a sincere political will to end the tragedy. Then again, can the regime embark on a sincere political road just by itself and without any external "push" of whatever type be it Mujahedeen continuouse actions, popular uprising, "political behaviour" induced financial aid...etc?

Many observers who try to understand the decision making process within the regime, that is within the high military hierarchy, have come to the conclusion that the system is articulated around three main poles of influence. The first pole who has made the vital decisions in 1991/92, has started to exit "silently and without much noise" to its prepared in advance "retirement castles". The second pole consists of those with a single vision of the problem, that in military terms such as "how many of us are we and how many of them are still there?". This pole, it must be said, has had a mission from the first group to "exterminate all those bearded ones by all means and at whatever cost" and it has been doing just that despite its paranoia of seeing a "bearded one" behind every Algerian. This pole has always in mind the faith of the French General Salan and his friends who has rebelled against Paris when they were told that the "principles" for which their troops were fighting were just circumstantial ideological arguments aimed at giving them a feeling of being in the "good guys side" and that what they call "dirty politics" has the merit of having a multi-vision of the problems of which the military side is just one aspect and sometimes not necessary the most important one. This pole is at war against "negative" external and internal influences.

It is at war against the Mujahedeen, the politicians, independant journalists, faithful witnesses, lawyers, the Algerian people, Influent foreign countries,...etc, in what they conceive as preventive measures to avoid being "ejected from the boat" without manners as General Salan and co were. The third pole consists of those "re-incorporated" army Generals who were given the mission of "re-civilianising" the regime "facet" by political means such elections, dialogue, conference and the like. This pole does not intend to stop at the limits of that mission but has ambitions of its own. The hegemonic ambition of gaining full control over both the civilian and the military side of the regime by reincarnating the Boumediene type of system with a false "multi- partyism" cosmetic dress. This pole still see the Egyptian and Tunisian models as the most appropriate for Algeria. This pole does not seem to take into account that the price of the barrel of oil is not forty dollars any more or that the heavy sacrifice paid by the Algerian people entitle them to a much much better faith. Both of the last poles are competing to move into the "empty space" left or in the process of being evacuated, by the first pole. So the military-military pole is saying to the civilian-military pole: "stay out of the military domain and leave that to us, the professionals. You better concentrate on your civilian side!". The civilian-military pole then started reshuffling all the civilian high officials while trying to "swallow" as much of the political class as it can.

The regime is like an object in the space going in the same direction preset by its initial conditions of the illegal military coup of 1992. Only forces external to the system can make it take the appropriate direction for the good of the Algeria and Algerian people.

The assassination of an Algerian bishop!

Bishop Pierre Claverie and his chauffeur were killed by a bomb explosion as his car was entering his residence in Oran, about 310 miles west of Algiers according to reports.

The 58-year-old bishop was born in Algeria and supported the Algerian nationalists in their 1954-62 struggle for independence from French rule. He is the son of a fourth generation european family established in Algeria. During the decisive "affiliation test" of the 1954-62 war, bishop Pierre Claverie have chosen Algeria as many other muslims have chosen France.

What make the assassination of bishop Pierre Claverie particular in the actual context of Algeria where no one is safe be it religious personality, Muslim or Christian, Algerian or foreigner, is the fact that this murder is directly related to the visit of the French foreign minister Herves de-Charrette on one hand and to the recent murder of seven French monks on the other hand.

While the "Pavlovian reflex" in automatically pointing the fingers to one extreme end (GIA) with the strong push from some news agencies who have been trying very hard all alone to present to the opinion, "arguments" to back their "unquestionable conclusions". It is

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hard to identify what interest groups they are defending if any.

It is also difficult to know if they are tarnishing further the already very black GIA image or that they are preventing the ugly face of the other "extreme end" (an uncontrollable part of the regime notorious secret police, la SM) from being exposed. For that they went looking for what the bishop may have said "against the Islamists" in 1991. This was enough for their on the spot judgement.

Nevertheless, serious commentators who do not pretend to know all that is happening and are genuinely and without complaisance, after the real identification of the bishop's murders and the authors of all obscure crimes that are taken place in Algeria, do leave all probable doors open until the proofs are presented. For example,they do not pretend to have answers to such questions as: — Why this assassination came at the END of Mr De Charrette visit and not just before or during his stay? The French foreign minister visit was announced many days before. — Who have access to information which enable the Bishop displacement to be monitored in real time from the monastery at Tibhirine, where the seven French monks assassinated last May are buried?. Bishop Claverie and other prominent clergymen have accompanied de Charette to Tibhirine. The distance from Tibherine to Oran where the bishop was killed is about six hundred kilometres. Some reports say that the Bishop took a plane from Algiers to Oran. This can only add to the suspicious that his murderers had access to Air Algerie airline confidential data (passengers list). — Reports from sources close to Western intelligence (compass newsagency) said that:" according to informed Algerian sources, the powerful bomb was detonated by remote control in a quite sophisticated way". And as Oran has been so far a relatively "quiet" city as far as the conflict is concerned, observers find it hard that an armed group having achieved such sophistication have not carried out any spectacular operation against the "symbols of the military regime" in that city.

The interpretation of the message behind this murder is according to observers who hold an "alternative vision" to the caricatur alone is that its authors did not like the "political chapter", the French minister discussed with the military regime behind close doors and his probable "suggestions" about the best solutions to "untie" the blocked situation inside the military enterprise concerning personnel reshuffling and all this of course in the clear and strict French policy of "non-interference in Algerian internal affairs".

Wasn't bishop Pierre Claverie in some way "prophetic" when he declared few hours before his assassination, about his fear from those who WILL (not have) strongly oppose any French influence on the situation.

The defence lawyer of the FIS leaders kidnapped by the secret police!

Maitre Rachid Mesli, the defence lawyer of the FIS leaders of Dr Abbassi Madani and shaykh Ali Belhadj, has been kidnapped by two gunmen in Algiers.

The prominent lawyer Rachid Mesli was abducted on Wednesday (31/07/96) by two gunmen near his office in Ain Taya district. He was driving a car accompanied by his son and brother-in-law who were released later on. Maitre Mesli's whereabout remains unknown.

The defence lawyers of the FIS leaders have always been ill- treated by the military regime secret police and have not been able to known where their clients are or if they are still alive.

Nothing has been known about shaykh Ali Belhadj since the inhuman conditions of isolation he was subjected to in the far south city of Tamanrasset last year. A document smuggled out of Algeria last year states that shaykh Ali Belhadj was maintained isolated in a cell that has only one close window for a period of eleven months because the FIS leaders would not give up on their convictions.

The FIS leaders's family and their lawyers have not had their right of visit established despite complain from everywhere.

According to some observers, the kidnapping of Maitre Mecili is related to the disclosure to the outside world last week of the assassination under torture of an FIS regional leader, brother Ben Othman Bouathira known as Said.

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak Returns From 'Quick Visit' to Saudi Arabia

NC0808175196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1635 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Aug (MENA)— President Husni Mubarak returned to Cairo this evening following a quick visit of several hours to Saudi Arabia where he held talks with the custodian of the two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. The discussions dealt with President Mubarak's visit to the United States and the results of the Egyptian-Syrian summit which was held in Alexandria yesterday and which focused on the Middle East peace process and ways of resuming negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track.

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In remarks made during his flight back to Cairo, President Mubarak announced that his meeting with the custodian of the two Holy Mosques was necessary in the wake of his U.S. visit, during which he discussed numerous Arab issues.

Mubarak added that his meeting with the custodian of the two Holy Mosques followed a series of communications he has had with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, King Husayn of Jordan, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, and other parties of the peace process.

Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif made a statement to reporters at the conclusion of the discussions between the two leaders, Mubarak and Fahd. Al-Sharif said that President Mubarak held a summit meeting at Jeddah Airport with the custodian of the two Holy Mosques, who was on hand to receive him.

The Egyptian information minister added that after private talks, an expanded meeting was held attended by the members of the Egyptian and Saudi delegations. On the Egyptian side there was Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, and Director of the President's Office Dr. Zakariya 'Azmi.

On the Saudi side the meeting was attended by Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, crown prince and first deputy prime minister; Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, minister of defense and civil aviation and second deputy prime minister; Prince Faysal Bin-Fahd, general chairman of youth affairs; Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Khuwaytir, minister of state and member of the cabinet; and Dr. Fu'ad al- Farisi, minister of information.

Al-Sharif said that today's meeting comes in the context of President Mubarak's wish to exchange views with the Arab leaders, particularly the Saudi leaders, because of the special ties between him and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the custodian of the two Holy Mosques.

The information minister explained that President Mubarak exchanged views with the custodian of the two Holy Mosques over several issues and new developments in the Arab region. He said that this exchange occurred against the background of President Mubarak's visit to the United States and his discussions with U.S. President Bill Clinton on some issues, notably the Middle East issue.

He added that Mubarak's talks with the Saudi king also dealt with the results of Mubarak's meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and his recent talks in Cairo with the Israeli prime minister. He noted that they made a comprehensive assessment of the situation in the Middle East and the peace issue in light of the recent Arab summit resolutions.

The information minister said that the views of the two Arab leaders on the Middle East issue were identical, noting that they emphasized the need to work harder for a just and comprehensive peace.

Al-Sharif concluded: The custodian of the two Holy Mosques praised President Mubarak's continuing efforts to implement the Arab summit's resolutions. The two leaders stressed the importance of coordinating the two countries' stands and exchanging views on a constant basis in order to promote the peace process as a strategic objective while at the same time remaining committed to the terms of reference of the peace process, which were reasserted by the Arab summit.

President Mubarak left Jeddah Airport at 1645 today following two hours of talks with the custodian of the two Holy Mosques. The custodian of the two Holy Mosques was at the head of the delegation which saw President Mubarak off.

Egypt: Envoy to Israel Discusses Peace, Hebron Redeployment

NC0808112596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1015 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, 8 Aug (MENA)—Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni has conveyed to the Israeli Minister of Economics Natan Sharanski, who is also the head of the Movement for Israel and Immigration Party, that there will not be any trade and economic cooperation with Israel in the absence of the peace process.

During his meeting with the Israeli minister today, the Egyptian ambassador asserted the need to activate and advance the peace process. This meeting is a part of series of meetings undertaken by the Egyptian ambassador with members of the new Israeli Government since its formation last June.

During a telephone call with a MENA correspondent in Gaza, Basyuni stated that the situation does not permit any delay on the part of Israel with regard to implementing its agreements with the Palestinians. He emphasized the need to redeploy the Israeli forces in Hebron and lift the security cordon imposed on the Palestinian territories in order to defuse the dangers that threaten the entire peace process.

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Libya

Libya: Government Urges Arab League To Discuss Israeli Chemical Weapons

LD0908100996 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0710 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 9 Aug — The Secretariat of the General People's Committee for Unity has held intensive contacts with the General Secretariat of the Arab League, urging it to convene an urgent meeting of the league's council in the wake of the international admission that the Israeli enemy is in possession of chemical and bacteriological weapons, including poison gas, in a plant in the Negev desert, and is engaged in research on bacteriological warfare. This came in a report by the English military information center [as received] and published by the English (JANE'S DEFENCE WEEKLY) and the Italian paper L'UNITA. The report also says that the Mosad had secret weapons.

The Great Jamahiriyah's call to convene an urgent meeting of the Arab League Council pertains to the danger represented by the Israeli possession of these weapons, together with 200 nuclear warheads, to the Arab national security and Arab existence.

Libya: New Islamic Group Announces Its Existence, Objectives

MM0908105396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 9 Aug 96 p 6

[Unattributed report: "New Libyan Group Emerges"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — The emergence of a new Libyan group calling itself "the Ansarallah [supporters of God] Group" was announced in a communique issued by the group's media department bearing yesterday's date, which was received by AL-HAYAH.

The communique, whose authenticity could not be confirmed, said: "Now that the tone of jihad has escalated in Libya, and the regime's heresy, injustice, and tyranny is on the increase, and out of the divine obligation to fight heretics and apostates, the Ansarallah Group has decided to make itself known in order to do its legitimate duty for Islam and the Muslims."

It added that "the Ansarallah Group is a mujahidin group trying to restore the Islamic caliphate...and believes that it is legitimate, nay imperative, to cooperate with all groups, sides, and people, as long as they are people of al-Qiblah [Muslims]."

The new group stressed that it is "an independent group with no links to the other militant or nonmilitant groups."

This is the third Islamic group to appear on the Libyan scene since last year. The other two groups are the Militant Islamic Group and the Islamic Martyrs' Movement.

Libya: Chinese Official 'Satisfied' With Results of Visit

LD0808135096 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Zhu Qizhen, member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress [NPC] in China and vice chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the NPC, and the delegation accompanying him left Tripoli this afternoon at the end of their visit to the Great Jamahiriyah. The delegation was seen off by the secretary of external affairs at the Secretariat of the General People's Congress.

In a statement to JANA, Mr. Zhu Qizhen said he was satisfied with the results of his visit to the Great Jamahiriyah. He reaffirmed the strength of friendly relations existing between the two peoples in the Great Jamahiriyah and China. He also stressed the need to bolster and strengthen these relations in their common interest.

Mr. Zhu Qizhen added that these relations between the Great Jamahiriyah and China would have a bright future thanks to the common desire and eagerness to develop them further and in various areas.

He concluded his statement by expressing his thanks and appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to him and the delegation accompanying him since their arrival in the land of the Great Jamahiriyah.

Sudan

Sudan: Iran To Run TV Station, Asked To Postpone Military Plans

NC0808193096 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 4 Aug 96 p 9

[From "The Brothers" page: "A Television Channel Controlled by the Iranian Cultural Center"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sudanese sources have confirmed that the Sudanese Government has agreed to let the Iranian Cultural Center operate a private television station called "The Brotherhood Channel." The channel is expected to start transmission in November. This step was taken in implementation of the strategic agreement between Iran and Sudan, which permits Iran to set up 10 branches of the center in a number of Sudanese cities.

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The sources said that the Iranian Jihad al-Bina organization will build the Sudanese intelligence services' building at a cost of $50 million on an vacant piece of land in the 'Ad Babakr area in Khartoum. That piece of land was earmarked for an airport during the last days of the Numayri regime.

The sources also confirmed that the Sudanese Government has sent a special envoy to Iran to convince the latter to postpone a number of military projects in eastern Sudan and on the Red Sea coast and to be content with the current Iranian presence. The sources added that the Sudanese Government took this stand in order to avoid conflicts with the Arab countries because of its unique relations with Iran and the Sudanese Government's desire to improve its impression on the Security Council.

The sources stressed that Iranian naval vessels continue to arrive in Port Sudan on mysterious missions and that there is a semiofficial presence of the charge's office affiliated to the Iranian Navy in the (Salalab) area near the air defense base.

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Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: President Mubarak Briefs King Fahd on U.S. Visit

LD0808191296 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1820 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jeddah, 8 August (SPA) — President Mubarak of Egypt held a session of talks this afternoon here with the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd 'Bin-Abd-al-'Aziz, before leaving for home after a quick visit to Saudi Arabia which lasted only a few hours. [passage omitted]

Egyptian diplomatic sources told SPA that during the talks there was a comprehensive review and assessment of the peace process in the Middle East with a view to formulating a unified Arab position to counter the negative development of events resulting from some recent Israeli positions.

The sources said that, in this context, President Mubarak briefed King Fahd on the results of his talks with President Clinton and the U.S. Congress during his visit to Washington last week, regarding the peace efforts and their continuation.

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd, Egypt's Mubarak Reject 'Lebanon First' Proposal

MM0908100996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 9 Aug 96 p 1

[Report by 'Abdallah al-Hajj in Jeddah and AL-HAYAH in Cairo: "Saudi Egyptian Summit Rejects 'Lebanon First'"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Reliable sources have confirmed to AL-HAYAH that the Saudi-Egyptian summit held for two hours yesterday afternoon at King 'Abd-al-'Aziz International airport between Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd 'Abd-al-'Aziz and President Husni Mubarak produced an agreement between the two sides to reject the Israeli proposal of "Lebanon First" and an agreement that "if Israel is serious about achieving a comprehensive peace in the region, the logical and just alternative would lie in implementing Security Council Resolution 425 calling for the withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Lebanon, and in adhering to the principles of peace based on the Madrid Conference as terms of reference and the 'land-for-peace' principle." [passage omitted]

United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates: Iran Deploys Missiles on Disputed Island

MM0908101596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 9 Aug 96 pp 1,6

[Report by Mustafa Shihab in Riyadh: "Iran Deploys Silkworm Missiles on Abu-Musa Island"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gulf Military sources have confirmed to AL-HAYAH that military surveillance organs in the region have recently detected some Iranian movements, particularly on Abu-Musa island, which is at the center of a dispute between Iran and the [United Arab] Emirates. The sources explained that some Iranian missiles, believed to be of the Silkworm type, have arrived on the island, but refused to reveal their number, saying only that Iranian military reinforcements are being monitored. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Yemen: Yemeni-Saudi Border Committee Issues Press Statement

JN0808203696 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A press statement was issued today after the meeting of the Yemeni-Saudi Joint Committee for Renewing the Border Marks. The statement says: The Yemeni-Saudi Joint Committee for Renewing Border Marks held the rest of the meetings of its sixth round of talks in the capital, Sanaa, from 5 to 8 August and in Riyadh from 10 to 15 June.

The meetings of this round showed a true desire of both sides to carry out the missions assigned to the Joint Committee and the sucommittees as agreed upon between the two sides.

The two sides also agreed to hold the next round of talks in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 7 September.

The meetings of this round concluded on 8 August.

The two sides expressed their satisfaction with the results, and the Saudi side in the Joint Committee thanked its fraternal Yemeni side for the warm reception and hospitality it was accorded.

The members of the Saudi side in the Joint Committee are headed by Murayyih Hasan al-Shahrani, director of the Military Survey Department in the Kingdom. They were seen off by brother Dr. Muhammad 'Abd-al-Malik al-'Ulufi, director of the Survey Department and head of the Yemeni side in the Joint Committee, and a number of committee members.

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Iraq: Saddam Discusses Palaces in Anniversary Speech

JN0808101796 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 0715 GMT 8 Aug 96

[Speech by Iraqi President Saddam Husayn on the eighth anniversary marking the end of the Iraq-Iran war, delivered at a ceremony on the reopening of the Presidential Palace in Baghdad on 8 August—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. O great people, O zealous men of our valiant Armed Forces, O brothers, O glorious women, O sons of our glorious nation throughout our great Arab homeland and the world, may God's peace and blessings be upon you.

We meet here today at the house of the people, the Presidential Palace, first to celebrate the sublime meanings embodied by the martyrs of the glorious al-Qadisiyah [Iraq-Iran war] who stood up to defend freedom and patriotism. They are the martyrs of sublime meanings and the great men and women of Iraq who sought martyrdom on the battlefields to defend the land, sanctities, and principles of Iraq and the nation. Our martyrs, who represent true patriotism and nationalism, fell in a war sought by those who wanted to extinguish the light coming from Baghdad and by their devils. That war lasted eight years until God granted us great victory on the great day, the Day of Days, 8 August 1988.

We make our statement this year at this place and in your presence to appreciate what was done by the honest men, who rebuilt what was destroyed by the evil ones and who added to this great edifice, in this glorious history of the great march of Iraq. We are doing this in light of the principles of the revolutionaries and strugglers and in light of the shining meanings of the values of construction found in the principles of the great Ba'th and well illustrated by the objectives of honesty and dedication expressed by the victorious march of July.

Today, we are celebrating the opening of the People's Palace, which was targeted by the evil ones in their abominable 30-state aggression in the first wave of destruction which targeted the symbols of the civilization of new Iraq. We postponed its opening until today although the lofty builders finished work in the old palace on 31 December 1992 and built the new building, which was added to it, in July 1995. They made it better than it had been guided by our slogan to build what was destroyed by the evil ones as it was or even better than it was.

This palace was built during the monarchy era. It had two floors then; the ground floor served as the king's offices, while the first floor was a residence for him and his family. Then, the palace did not have any meanings or symbols that relate to the spirit and will of the people.

When the evildoers destroyed it in the 30-state aggression, the palace had many great meanings and symbols, which were added to it by the march of the July Revolution. It was the scene of the events of the glorious 17 and 30 July Revolution on those two eternal days. At the end of each meeting by the Iraq Command [of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party] or the Revolution Command Council, several significant resolutions for the benefit of the people were issued in this palace and in its peer, the National Assembly Palace. We inherited these two buildings, shortly before they were completed, from the bygone monarchy following the 14 July Revolution against monarchy and colonialism.

Then came al-Qadisiyah and the Republican Palace began to burst with great meanings, as demonstrated by the meetings that took place in it. These were crowned in its main hall, which was named the Hall of Heroes. There, we met and honored the valiant men and glorious women, who came in their thousands from all over Iraq and from all corps of the armed forces, and some came from the great Arab homeland. In this hall, the Iraqis exemplified the fresh meanings of glory through the Medals of Valor, the al-Rafidayn Medals, the al-Qadisiyah Medals, al-Qadisiyah Swords, and the title of al-Qadisiyah Heroes. In this hall also, we met with some brothers and comrades, some of whom are now dead, while others continue to follow the path of glory and faith and adhere to their position.

In this house of the people, the Iraqis, through their representatives, celebrated most of the national occasions. They sang the praise of the glorious meanings and gave, or reaffirmed, the oath to continue the march.

This palace became connected to all these great meanings after it was only pieces of stone when the kings ordered it to be built. The plans for the palace were drawn by the foreigners, the masters of those rulers. They did not train the Iraqis or give them the chance to learn in order to exercise, once again, a role in constructing great buildings or accumulate experience in that field. The Iraqis were deprived of playing such a role for some 1,000 years. Their style of building was, in general, unattractive, uncreative, depressing, and misrepresenting of some aspects of the history. Their buildings were mud houses and bamboo huts, which can be seen everywhere, with some exceptions in certain cities. The Iraqis were deprived from experiencing the large spaces and high ceilings in their buildings, and they were deprived from the great meanings these have when they are put in the service of the people.

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A palace with such a great history was targeted by the evil ones in the 30-state aggression. They imagined that by doing so they would destroy the Iraqi people's memory of the details of their history that was recorded in this building. The Iraqis then vied to rebuild it and add two wings to it so as to elevate it to the level ordained by God for this stage and so that the slogan "better than before" would be achieved. It now speaks for all the past stages.

The 30-state aggression did not target only this great palace, but other palaces of smaller area and minor quality such as al-Salam [Peace] Palace, which was designed almost like a hotel. Its construction was completed after the revolution and it was scheduled to host an Arab summit which did not convene. It was dedicated for a specific state activity, but was destroyed in the aggression, along with the prime ministry; al-Sujud Palace; the special occasions hall near al-Zaqurah, which was built at that time to be the headquarters of the foreign ministry; al-Bayraq, which was assigned for a state sector and it was called al-Bayraq only after the aggression; and Dar-al-Nasr guest house.

These palaces and buildings were built before the 30-state aggression at various stages for various purposes. The 30-state aggressors directed their bombs and missiles at them, targeting the fully constructed ones with the exception of al-Faw Palace, which was in the early stages of construction and, from the enemy viewpoint, was not worth the dangers of reaching it or the cost of the bombs and missiles that would be used to hit it. Another exception was a palace called the National Assembly, which was one of the state buildings. It was not hit. The National Assembly building and other guest houses were used by some state agencies until the destroyed installations and palaces were rebuilt.

All the installations destroyed by the evil ones, including the palaces and guest houses, were rebuilt. Some of them were in the final touches stage. We directed that these palaces be rebuilt as we rebuilt the destroyed economic installations, bridges, hospitals, schools, institutes, mosques, churches, dams, and houses according to building plans that make them better than before so that they will, God willing, be witness to the will of man who believes in a just cause and relies on God, instead of keeping the destroyed buildings piles of debris indicative of disability and frustration. Had it not been for the changes and additions, they would all have been ready for use a long time ago. The final touches of some were delayed because we sought experiences commensurate with our national capabilities so that these buildings would reflect an important aspect of the sublime new as well as traditional architectural art whose roots extend deep into our heritage of culture, art, and both national and pan-Arab ideals. Such a level of expertise and skill will then prevail and it has actually prevailed throughout Iraq after the foreign expertise and capabilities remained outside the border.

God willing, we sought to make the palaces a distinctive feature of the phase and imbue them with the cultural values of the phase. We wanted them to represent a school of thought in architecture, skill, and construction expertise that promotes the value of construction throughout Iraq when accumulated experience makes its contribution felt. Iraqi architecture, which was of meager quality, developed from mud huts and imitations of Western architecture. Thus, the value of construction was actually promoted, and skill was enhanced in al-Basrah, Baghdad, Babil, Mosul, and Salah al-Din. They will be further promoted throughout Iraq in the future, especially since contemporary Iraqis rehabilitated the skills and resourcefulness of the architecture enjoyed by Namrud, Nineveh, al-Hadr, Babylon, Sumer, Samarra', and Baghdad, which have been obscured for approximately 1,000 years.

The enemies were exasperated by the fact that Iraqis rebuilt what was destroyed during the aggression inasmuch as they were enraged by the Iraqis' steadfastness in the face of the aggression and the embargo. They expressed their exasperation and indignation by various means and on various occasions. They called the palaces and guest houses Saddam's palaces as if they deliberately sought to consecrate the personal element and deny the significance that we have talked about. However, their purpose in this regard was unsuccessful. They have chosen to overlook the fact that these palaces and guest houses were built or rebuilt because they were destroyed by them during the 30-state aggression, and that the reconstruction endeavor took place in the people's era, which is led by Saddam Husayn's comrades. [extended applause] They mistakenly said that these palaces total 14.

O evil enemies: These are the people's palaces. They were built by the people who made them their homes. The people, each according to his or her occasion and circumstances, made these palaces places for national and social functions. The great Iraqi people know these palaces. Likewise, the builders who rebuilt them, demonstrating innovation in the name of God are well aware of the great significance of these palaces. Our great people do not need to be reminded of these palaces, because they know them very well. Some know the basic details of these palaces as well as they know their own homes.

Iraqis have known these palaces and guest houses, because many of them had access to them, sang, and

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shouted slogans upholding sublime values in them. They articulated their positions in them and outside them as well. They proved to be people who are true to their words and who honor the noble pledge and honest undertaking. Did the evil aggressors believe that it was too much for the great Iraqi people to have such edifices at this age? Did they think that it is too much for the people who have rich civilizations behind them to possess expertise and knowledge in this area, particularly since they rebuilt these palaces to lend additional significance to the other aspects of reconstruction throughout Iraq and make these palaces serve as great nationalist edifices in terms of their high significance and importance? Or was it their disappointment after they were denied the chance to rebuild them and build new palaces in exchange for a lot of money, just as they are doing in other well- known places? Did they forget that the triangle they engraved on the facade of their house which they called the White House was engraved by the al-Hadr civilization on its buildings more than 2,000 years ago? They have forgotten this. They expressed their astonishment and denunciation because some of these palaces are bigger than their white palace, believing that the Iraqis and Arabs do not read history well.

They thought that we did not know that modern Iraq has not yet reached in this age what was reached by our ancestors in our ancient civilizations and in the Islamic era in terms of building palaces, mosques, and places of worship. We will achieve their great meanings, God willing. [applause] We are aware and we have not forgotten that most of the buildings which housed the entourages of Iraq's kings and rulers, as well as the caliphs, were larger than their White palace. We are also aware that the architecture of these buildings, particularly when they embody the meanings of justice and chivalry — and even the houses of the servants of the kings and caliphs — was more beautiful than that of their White palace.

You remember, O brothers, how the charlatans and archcolonialists launched their famous fabrication in 1992 when they said that Saddam Husayn has personal funds in Swiss banks and that his brother was appointed an ambassador there to take care of these funds on behalf of Saddam Husayn. Then Information Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi gave a smart reply when he said: Wherever you find personal funds for Saddam Husayn anywhere in the world, take them, O failed ones, and send us only five percent of them so that we may spend them on the Iraqi people. Thus, this claim subsided and evaporated into thin air.

In this, they — the lowly ones — wanted to portray Saddam Husayn as if he was suffering from the same problems from which they and their agents in the Arab homeland are suffering; namely, Saddam's palaces. After their claims about Saddam's palaces failed, they — shame on them — wanted to say to those who do not know Saddam, as the people of Iraq know him, that he, like the other rulers from their agents, is building palaces for himself and hoarding the people's money for himself. They wanted, through this, to discredit the characteristics of faith and genuineness which God has bestowed on us, on the leadership, on all our militant comrades, and our zealous people. These characteristics were enriched by the march of July [revolution], al-Qadisiyah, and the Mother of Battles with high values. They wanted to make the sons of our nation, who look at Iraq as an example, to become concerned about their example in its great march.

O brothers, O glorious women: The one charged with counting the number of palaces and houses of the people of Iraq erred as they erred in calling them Saddam's palaces. Saddam's does not have 14 palaces; there are far more. Had they been only 14 palaces we would have wronged ourselves and our people's capabilities. After relying on God, we built palaces and houses throughout Iraq. Before building them on the ground, we built them deeply in the conscience and souls of our comrades and people through great interaction, love, honesty, faithfulness, and common action. Our objective is to turn Iraq into an example for the nation on the basis of faith in the great principles which are the most important headlines of this stage.

We built for the people houses of freedom, true patriotism, and spirit of resistance against falsehood so that light will dispel darkness. Thousands, in fact, millions of houses and palaces were built instead of the miserable houses which were built from mud, reeds, and tents, and instead of the houses whose roofs were made of tins and trees.

We built them in the name of God and they thrived to become great examples in Baghdad, al-Najaf, Karbala', al- Basrah, Mosul, Salah-al-Din, Irbil, and Dahuk and in all Iraqi cities and rural areas. Their number is so great that even when they join hands, the Americans and the Zionists cannot cover them with a single surprise attack with their bombs and missiles, which they prepared, in vain, against the leadership. Their number is greater than all the missile bases and the death-pouring planes which the Americans possess. They are every house in the Iraq of revolution and freedom. Therefore, and praised be God, the all merciful, their bombs could not hit the leadership or Saddam Husayn's small family in their 30-state aggression. This is because should Saddam Husayn need to enter any citizen's house, doors will be

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open and he will be welcomed, and we praise God for that. [applause and chants]

Our palaces and houses are every modern house that sprang in Iraq's rural areas, leaving behind the houses of mud and backwardness. They are every house which the revolution, with its new regime and resources that were wrested from the imperialist oil companies, and with a spirit of creativity, built in the large neighborhoods of the cities of great Iraq.

With the blessings and support of God, we will continue to build for the people palaces, houses, bridges, places of worship, roads, schools, factories, hospitals, colleges, channels, and dams, the significance of which will infuriate the enemy.

God willing, we will also continue its construction effort to please the people and our friends and to infuriate the enemies, who were denied the chance to rebuild what they destroyed themselves, because the people of Iraq learned how to build and mastered the techniques and meanings of building. [chants and applause]

Brothers and sisters; O great people, our valiant Armed Forces, and citizens of our glorious nation: Eight years ago, the war and showdown came to a halt. The result of Saddam's glorious al- Qadisiyah was God's promotion of the status of the magnanimous martyrs and those who remained alive due to their generous sacrifices. It was a great victory from God. It marked the end of a chapter, designed by major players for a proxy, to stop the construction drive and the process of rebuilding the individual to fulfill great tasks.

When more candles were lit in great Iraq to dispel darkness after the day of victory, the Day of Days, and when more resources, opportunities, and experience were added, another chapter started in the immortal Mother of Battles. This is the destiny of he who wishes to dispel darkness, defeat backwardness, and make faith shine. This is also the destiny of he who wishes to see the model emulated, justice established, and rights returned, and who wants to build for the people. We thank God for everything. We beseech him to have mercy on our virtuous martyrs, the martyrs of great Iraq, in all its national battles in the glorious al-Qadisiyah and the immortal Mother of Battles. We also beseech Him to have mercy on the martyrs of our nation in all battles of liberation everywhere. We beseech God to make the reopening of this national edifice, with its great meanings, symbolize the beginning of fortune, blessings, peace, and security for our people, nation, and Armed Forces.

Peace be on the martyrs and the glorious women. Peace be upon those who are still faithful to the pledge. God is great, God is great, God is great. [applause]

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Israel: Netanyahu Calls Syria to Wye Talks To Build Confidence

TA0808183496 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 8 Aug 96

[Video report by army affairs correspondent Alon Ben-David]

[FBIS Translated Text] This evening, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu called on Syria to resume the talks at Wye Plantation without preconditions. Mr. Netanyahu was addressing National Defense College students a short time ago. Alon Ben-David reports:

[Begin recording] [Ben-David] One could say that the prime minister patched up his relations with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] or, to be more precise, with the IDF's top brass this evening. Following a very recriminatory speech by a student who complained that the IDF is not getting any backing from Israeli society, the prime minister expressed full confidence in the IDF and its commanders.

[Netanyahu] I want to tell you that I have full confidence in the IDF; I have full confidence in the chief of staff; I have full confidence in the IDF's senior staff; I have full confidence in the commanders sitting here, right down to the last one. I think it is important that the IDF be left out of politics. If the IDF or somebody in the IDF was dragged into politics, the IDF and its commanders are exempt of any responsibility.

[Ben-David] Addressing graduates of the National Defense College, as well as IDF, Israel Police, Mosad, and Shin Bet officers, the prime minister expounded on his political creed and on how he thinks peace can be promoted. Two principles guide me, he said: sincere intentions and security arrangements. Here are the conditions he posed to Syria:

[Netanyahu] We would like to see the end of the harsh rhetoric against Israel. Of course, we would like to see the end of terror from Lebanon and terror organizations based in Damascus. Therefore, I call on the Syrian president to prove the sincerity of his intentions regarding peace and to accept our proposal to resume the peace negotiations at Wye Plantation.

[Ben-David] Turning to the Palestinian issue, the prime minister said he believes progress can continue to be made in the process, perhaps even during this government's tenure. He promised the students: I will come here and present my concept of the permanent arrangement with the Palestinians. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 8 August adds that the prime minister also said that "signs in the right direction are discernible in the Palestinian Authority's actions against terror. He called on the Syrian president to accept Israel's proposals to resume the talks at Wye Plantation in Maryland because such acceptance would be a basis for building relations of mutual confidence and appreciation. The first place where there is growing friction is Lebanon. We are prepared to get out of Lebanon on condition that peace for the Galilee is ensured, Hizballah is disarmed, and the Lebanese Army is deployed on the international border. The current Kafkaesque situation, however, is that the governments of Syria and Lebanon are the ones opposed to our withdrawal from Lebanon."]

Israel: Netanyahu Sends Gold to Cairo To Discuss Talks With al-Asad

TA0808183696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dore Gold, the prime minister's adviser, left for Egypt today to meet with President Mubarak's adviser Usamah al-Baz in the wake of yesterday's meeting in Cairo between the Egyptian president and Hafiz al-Asad. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the prime minister spoke with Egyptian President Mubarak yesterday, and the latter told him that Syria had actually rejected Israel's proposals for the resumption of the negotiations. Egyptian Ambassador Muhammad Basyuni called on the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem today to report on the Mubarak-al-Asad meeting.

Our correspondent points out that the prime minister's bureau refused to confirm Gold's departure for Egypt, but our aviation affairs correspondent Yo'av Aviv has learned that an Air Sinai flight to Cairo today was delayed 30 minutes while the passengers sat in the plane until Dr. Gold boarded it.

Israel: Netanyahu Interviewed on Palestinians, Economics, Germany

LD0808140396 Munich ARD Television Network in German 2100 GMT 7 Aug 96

[Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu by correspondent Sigmund Gottlieb in Jerusalem; date not given— recorded; Netanyahu speaks in English with simultaneous translation into German]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Gottlieb] Prime Minister, we are here in the Israeli Government's cabinet room. This is the first interview that you have given to the German public. They are very interested in knowing what kind of man you are, what policies you are pursuing. During the past few days, many surprising things have happened in the Middle East: A hectic spate of diplomatic travel

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has started; you yourself have been working very intensively; you travelled to Amman and met the King of Jordan and afterwards, you said something surprising. You said you could imagine reaching a complete peace with Syria. Many people were surprised by this. With this statement, has Netanyahu punished all those liars who said that he stood for the end of the peace process?

[Netanyahu] Well, there is no reason for surprise because I was elected to achieve peace, peace with security, which is the only form of peace in our part of the world. I am not interested in the peace process itself, I am interested in achieving peace with all our neighbors. We have resumed negotiations with the Palestinian leadership, just as we promised. We are in the process of agreeing with the Syrian Government to resume peace negotiations between our two countries, just as we promised. I see no cause for surprise. Perhaps it is a surprise that political leaders actually do what they promised to do before the elections, but for me that should be a norm and not an exception.

[Gottlieb] But some things have been a surprise, Prime Minister. In your government statement, you said there would be a new policy for the settlement areas, you said that Jerusalem could never be divided, and you said that there would never be a separate Palestinian state, and many people in the Arab world said that this was no prerequisite for a peace process. How do you propose to make progress here?

[Netanyahu] There is a very peculiar concept of negotiations when people talk about Israel. If Germany negotiates with another country, it doesn't have to immediately accept the conditions that are set by the negotiating partners. And yet people demand this of Israel. The Arabs have their own ideas about the final status of the negotiations and we have our own. But people demand of us that we accept the final conditions set by the other side as our starting position. I am only negotiating in the same manner as Germany would, as Russia would, as the United States did with the Soviet Union. We have differences of opinion with the Arabs as far as the final result is concerned. This is the reason for the negotiations and this is what we are doing. We are negotiating in order to achieve, eventually, an agreement for peace.

[Gottlieb] I would like to give a bit of information about you personally, Mr. Netanyahu; in Germany you are not that well-known; you will be visiting us soon. You are 46 years old, a man who has made a rapid rise to the top of his country. There is, I believe, one key experience in your life and that is the death of your brother in Entebbe in 1976. Would you be here in this room, in this position, in this office if this had not happened?

[Netanyahu] Well, I don't know about that, it is hard enough to look in the future, but sometimes it is harder to judge the past. But it is clear that this event had a very strong influence on my personal life. Not so much entering politics, but in cooperating with the international efforts to combat terrorism, a plague which continues to burden our society. But I took the decision to become a politician somewhat later. I went to the United Nations when I was 35 years old; my brother fell when the Entebbe hostages were freed when I was 27.

[Gottlieb] But could this very personal experience explain your toughness in the fight against terrorism?

[Netanyahu] No, I believed in that before. I did my military service in a special unit in my country, I fought terrorism as a soldier, but you mentioned my brother. He never saw the fight against international terrorism as a purely military fight. He was convinced that the war against terrorism is one which one is politically and morally bound to fight, and this is because most terrorism is not the product of isolated individuals but of groups, organizations backed by states; and therefore, the fight against international terrorism is a fight against terrorist states. I believe I have made a contribution toward combating international terrorism. For example, with airplane hijacking in the 1980's, people said that you could not do anything about it, but we were successful because we tackled those countries. I believe that we can stop international terrorism today as well if we put pressure on the terrorist states.

[Gottlieb] Is the PLO one of the terrorist groups?

[Netanyahu] It certainly used to be, until a few months ago. It did not support terrorism actively, but it tolerated Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad in the Palestinian autonomy areas. Hamas and Jihad were organizing downright savage terrorism, and the Palestinian leadership essentially did not fight it. A few months ago, after the terrible attacks in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the peace process came to a standstill and 'Arafat finally took action. It has not yet been finalized, it is still not quite satisfactory, but of course it makes the difference which we can see today and which reaffirms my point of view, namely, that as soon as terrorists are not supported by a protective power, it is very hard for them to operate with the measure of destructiveness that they enjoy when they do have such protection.

[Gottlieb] Mr. Netanyahu, you say that a Palestinian state is out of the question for you, but in fact only a state can satisfy 'Arafat. How are you going to solve this problem? To ask you concretely, will you meet 'Arafat soon?

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[Netanyahu] As I said, we have different views on what the final agreement will look like. My personal view is that the Palestinians should be free and settle their own affairs almost without our interference. But we have to be protected against those things which endanger Israel. Such agreements are possible: the Palestinians could have their own representatives, their own institutions, administer every aspect of their lives themselves, trade, culture, education, health, etc. There is an apparent difference of opinion between left and right. I ask, Israelis are Europeans, would they agree to having a state in the Tel Aviv suburbs with 250,000 armed men, and even the left in Israel immediately says no. That there be a state which could conclude a military pact with Iran and Iraq? And they say no.

[Gottlieb] Will you meet Mr. 'Arafat? I will ask you once more. [preceding sentence in English]

[Netanyahu] You do not have to press me, you can rest assured you will get your answer. You have been in Israel too long and you have become just like an Israeli journalist. I will answer the question, but you asked me two questions. What we seek is something that will give the Palestinians maximum freedom with the minimum security that we need. In Europe and in other parts of the world, too, in Asia and in the new republics which emerged from the ashes of the Soviet Union, we should reconsider whether every national group which wants its own state should actually get it. This would confuse the whole international system. At the same time, I do not want to keep occupying militarily a national group which does not wish to live under me. Therefore, we need new models. Therefore, this very generous autonomy, which we are speaking about, which in effect would guarantee our security, but which enables the Palestinians to administer themselves, is not only a model for a just solution in our case, but also for other parts of the world.

Now whether or not I meet 'Arafat, that is your question. I have said that I will not rule it out. As you know, our foreign minister has met him and other ministers will also have contacts with him. The work continues; we will continue to negotiate and at the appropriate time, I will make the decision on the question that you ask.

[Gottlieb] What does appropriate time [last two words in English] mean? This year?

[Netanyahu] Well, at the appropriate time, I would be pleased to give you another interview.

[Gottlieb] Mr. Netanyahu, from time to time, your predecessors strongly criticized the German Government for its policies vis-a-vis Iran. What is your view? There was a much-noticed operation, which Germany helped to organize, but which is not spoken about much, but it is closely connected to this. Don't you have to maintain certain relations in order to achieve things in international politics which you would otherwise not achieve?

[Netanyahu] First of all, I am very grateful to the German Government and Chancellor Kohl for the humanitarian help in returning our missing soldiers, and in fact this included contacts with Iran. But having this basic humanitarian contact with a regime, such as the one in Iran, does not mean that one approves of such a regime. Even at the time of the war with the worst regime in history, such contacts were maintained in order to exchange prisoners, and no one who carried out these exchanges approved of the terrible regime. Iran is not an Israeli problem. It is a world problem. It represents a fanatical profession of faith that is aimed against the whole of our civilization—not only against our Western civilization, but also against our neighboring states.

I have recently visited some of these governments and they are all equally threatened by the increasing fanaticism being systematically and inflexibly spread by Tehran. As a consequence, the world's oil pipes, peace in the Middle East, peace in Europe are under threat. Wherever there are fanatical Islamic communities embedded in peaceful Islamic communities, there are fanatics who stick to Iran and who are endangering the peace in Europe. This threatens the air routes, it threatens our joint way of life, and I believe that it is very important to send a very clear message to Iran to say that as long as Iran behaves in this way, it will not count as one of the civilized countries, and the civilized nations will take the necessary political and economic measures to ensure that Iran understands this message properly.

[Gottlieb] Mr. Netanyahu, I would like to return to the topic of your visit to Germany this year. We are all looking forward to the visit. Mr. Weizman, your president, visited Germany at the beginning of the year and there was a lot of fuss, a lot of disquiet. He told the World Congress of Jewish Students that, as a Jew, he could not imagine living in Germany; the Jews in Germany should leave the country and help build up Israel.

[Netanyahu] Well, I have a different way of approaching this. First, I would like to make it clear that I consider Germany to be a very important country in the world and a very important ally. I say ally not just because we have made a formal pact, but because I believe that in principle we want to see the same things in the world. I had excellent talks with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and I am looking forward to visiting Germany. As a Jewish state, we would like to see Jews from all over the

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world coming to Israel. The main concern of Zionism is bringing as many Jews as possible to the country and I certainly do not exclude the Jews of Germany, so that is my answer to you.

[Gottlieb] But Weizman's point of view is not your own?

[Netanyahu] Well, you could ask the president and I am sure he would be glad to reply. I have formulated my answer.

[Gottlieb] Some time ago, you said that in the past, economic questions in Israel were not dealt with intensively enough. You yourself received professional experience in the United States at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and you have said that there is a lot to do as regards economic policy. Now I would like to ask what message you are giving to international investors, German investors, who obviously have at the back of their minds the fact that the situation in your region is not exactly the most stable. What message can you give to these people?

[Netanyahu] First of all, I think we are moving in the direction of peace and I believe we will continue peace efforts both with the Palestinians and with the Syrians and all other countries in the Arab world. I believe that the idea that here we have a form of extremist, demonic government will be dispelled everywhere. I can tell you that it has already been dispelled in the Arab world and I am sure it will disappear in Europe, too.

Second, I believe that we have enormous economic prospects; even today, we almost have the GDP per capita of Great Britain, despite having one of the most centralized economies in the world. I intend to decentralize this economy, I intend to privatize state companies, to open up the economy.

The reason for my belief that we have an excellent future is that measured against the total population, we have the most highly qualified workforce. Nowadays, great riches come from ideas. The richest man in the world is still the Sultan of Brunei, but I think that the second richest man is Bill Gates. I thing he made $16 billion in 10 years. Where did these riches come from? They came from his brain. We have many people who work with their heads, in technology, in science. If we privatize, Israel could become one of the great economic success stories of the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries.

Now, my message to German investors is: Come in, enjoy it. It is not a message for aid. I am not asking for philanthropy and I am not asking for support. I ask for partnership.

[Gottlieb] What concrete opportunities do you make available to investors?

[Netanyahu] My incentive is profit. I believe we have the preconditions that attract investors. However, the important conditions are not tax exemption and subsidies. The main question that German investors and investors all over the world must ask themselves is: Where is the new growth? Where in the world will high-tech industry grow? Israel is becoming one of the biggest centers of growth, in communications, information technology, in various laser applications. We will make progress in all these areas, and because, as you know, we have very comprehensive trade with Germany, I would like to see that trade coupled with joint ventures with German companies, and I would be very happy if more of them came in, and in fact more of them are coming in.

[Gottlieb] Mr. Netanyahu, your message to the business people has been understood. In your view, what political role could Germany play in the Middle East?

[Netanyahu] I think it can be a force of considerable importance. Germany is a very important country. Germany could play a leading part by facilitating a climate of reconciliation—and I believe this is Germany's intention—and second, by involvement in economic projects. We are strengthening our economic cooperation with our neighbor Egypt. There are a number of large projects in the energy sector. The same applies to Jordan. We are currently considering a gas pipeline which would link Jordan, Israel, and the Gulf states. Foreign investors, including German companies, could play a leading part in this. I support German involvement in developing the infrastructure, for instance, for the Palestinians. In this area, I will pursue a policy of economic openness. I am making it easier for Palestinian workers to enter Israeli towns in order to improve their situation, too. We have some ideas on setting up industrial parks. The involvement of states like Germany—as a donor and as an investor—in these various projects in the Middle East can, I believe, make an important contribution to peace; and since I value Germany and I value its potential contribution, I think it could be a very important player here indeed.

Israel: Levi Sees Possible Removal, Other Cabinet Post

TA0808180196 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 8 Aug 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Our political editor Gadi Sukenik reports that Foreign Minister David Levi told

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his associates this evening: Binyamin Netanyahu apparently does not want me as foreign minister. Perhaps I will be a minister and a member of the coalition but not the foreign minister.

Israel: Levi Boycotts Cabinet Session; Netanyahu Supports Ne'eman

TA0908100096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister David Levi did not attend today's weekly cabinet session in Jerusalem. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that at the cabinet session, Justice Minister Ya'aqov Ne'eman, who resigned from his post yesterday, repeated his accusations against Attorney General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir, while the latter reiterated his position. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu expressed his support for the justice minister and said he hoped that the investigation against him would be over soon.

The cabinet received a security briefing on the situation in the territories, and the prime minister said that the Israel Police must prevent members of the Palestinian Authority [PA] from opening offices in East Jerusalem. The cabinet also discussed proposals on how to fight road accidents.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0800 GMT on 9 August reports that "this is the second time Levi has failed to attend an important cabinet session; he was also absent from the cabinet session on 7 August. One of David Levi's associates told our correspondent Gil Litman that the foreign minister's aide Ya'aqov Bardugo and Avigdor Lieberman, the director general of the prime minister's office, are holding contacts to resolve the crisis. The source noted that everything remains open, and he is not certain that any decision will be reached this week."]

Israel: Sharon 'Secretly' Discussing Settlement in PA Areas

TA0808165496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] National Infrastructure Minister Ari'el Sharon does not exclude the establishment of new settlements in the territories in addition to the expansion of existing settlements. Following a meeting with Me'ir Porush, deputy construction and housing minister, Sharon said the possibility of building settlements in areas that will not be transferred to the Palestinians after the final stage talks should be considered. Our correspondent Tom Shin'an reports:

[Begin Shin'an recording] The new term secretly referred to in the National Infrastructure Ministry these days is the eastern slope [sheluha mizrahit], but behind this term one can discern the old plan of expanding the Jewish settlements in the Jordan Valley, as well as settlements located to the west in areas currently located in the autonomy area. Publicly, however, National Infrastructure Minister Ari'el Sharon spoke in a more moderate vein today: Jews will settle in all the existing settlements, and the present settlements will be expanded. New settlements, however, will be established only outside the Palestinian Authority [PA] areas according to what is agreed in the permanent stage talks. [passage omitted] [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1505 GMT on 8 Aug carries a related report on Sharon's remarks with regard to settlement in Judaea and Samaria. In a recorded passage, Sharon says: "As for Judaea and Samaria, we will implement the government's policy. What has been decided is that Jews will indeed settle in all existing settlements and that these settlements will grow. This is a natural and understood process, as well as a necessary and vital one. As for new settlements, the government has not yet set its policy, but it most probably will. I suppose the government's policy on this issue will be affected by the permanent plans, certainly in areas that will clearly not be part of the Palestinian autonomy but will remain in Israel's hands. After the situation is decided in the permanent arrangements, there will certainly be no impediment to expand Jewish settlement there."]

Israel: Sharon, Jordanian Ambassador Discuss Economic Cooperation

TA0808153296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] National Infrastructure Minister Ari'el Sharon met this afternoon with Jordanian Ambassador 'Umar al-Rifa'i to discuss economic cooperation between the two countries. Minister Sharon proposed to his guest to rebuild the 'Abdallah Bridge north of the Dead Sea with joint funds in order to open a new road between Jordan and Israel and to lay a railroad from the southern part of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Elat which would pass alternately on both sides of the border. Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that the water shortage in Jordan and Israel's possible assistance also featured in the meeting.

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Israel: Spokesman Denies Army Practicing Reentry Into West Bank

TA0808141296 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 7 Aug 96 p 3

[Interview with Avi Benayahu, Israeli defense minister spokesman, by 'Abd-al-Ra'uf Arna'ut; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Arna'ut] Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu announced that 5,000 Palestinian laborers will be allowed into Israel.

[Benayahu] Yes. The prime minister discussed this matter with Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay two days ago, and they decided to allow 5,000 workers to enter Israel.

This decision will not be implemented today or tomorrow. It will be discussed very soon by the army and security establishments in order for it to be implemented. We will ascertain that the workers' entry into Israel will not cause problems.

[Arna'ut] The Israeli defense minister is conducting discussions and studies about the Israeli army's redeployment in Hebron. What is the outcome to date?

[Benayahu] So far, Mordekhay has visited Hebron three times within a short period and met with Hebron Mayor Mustafa al-Natshah, settlement leaders, and officials belonging to the security services there. He will visit Hebron for the fourth time next week.

By that time, he will finish his review of the issues relating to the Hebron redeployment and will submit his plan to the Israeli cabinet for discussion, but the date and manner of redeployment will be negotiated with the Palestinian Authority.

[Arna'ut] When will this process take place?

[Benayahu] Reports by the news media that this process will take months are not true. It will be implemented within a few weeks.

[Arna'ut] The Israeli defense minister is expected to meet with President 'Arafat. Has a date been set for this meeting?

[Benayahu] So far, no date has been set. This is not because the defense minister does not want to meet with 'Arafat or has a problem with this, but because the topics that will be on the agenda of this meeting have not been determined yet.

I believe that the meeting will take place very soon and that Yitzhaq Mordekhay will be the second minister to meet with 'Arafat after Foreign Minister David Levi.

[Arna'ut] A Palestinian official has charged that Israel recently conducted military exercises aimed at the Israeli army's reentry into West Bank towns.

[Benayahu] I can assure you that these reports are totally unfounded.

Israel: 4 Gaza Hamas Leaders Allowed Into West Bank To Ease Tension

TA0808150796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel has allowed four Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leaders from the Gaza Strip to travel to the West Bank in an effort to ease tensions in Nabulus and Tulkarm. Among them is Mahmud al-Zahhar. They will also meet with Hamas leaders from the West Bank ahead of the renewed dialogue between the fundamentalist group and the Palestinian Authority.

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Lebanon: Sources Say Report on Israeli-Lebanese Meeting 'Fabricated'

NC0808132196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanese diplomatic sources have denied a report published by the Israeli paper MA'ARIV that Dore Gold, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's political adviser, and Cabinet Secretary Dani Nave had met with an official representative of the Lebanese Government in an European capital. The Lebanese sources said this report is fabricated and baseless.

Lebanon: Hizballah Denounces Israeli 'Aggressions' on Civilians

NC0908114296 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 9 Aug 96 p 10

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on the latest Israeli aggressions, Hizballah has issued a statement saying that "Hizballah strongly denounces the enemy's persistent aggressions against civilians. It calls on the Monitoring Group members to fully live up to their responsibility regarding the implementation of the clauses of the understanding [concluded with Israel following Operation Grapes of Wrath]. The Lebanese State is also supposed to adopt practical measures showing that it shoulders its responsibility to protect civilians.

"Hizballah would like to stress its keenness to maintain the safety of and safeguard the security of civilians. It also emphasizes that the repeated Zionist aggressions against the Lebanese territory and people will only increase its determination to hold tight to the path of resistance until the land and people are liberated from the occupation and its repeated aggressions."

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Returns From Damascus, Meets al-Hirawi

NC0808165696 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi met this evening at B'abda Palace with Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, who has returned from Damascus, where he met with a number of Syrian officials. Al-Hariri met with the president this morning and Interior Minister Michel al-Murr joined the meeting. After the meeting, al-Murr said the elections will not be postponed for more than two weeks, if at all. He expected the Interior Ministry to finalize the new formulation for the draft election law this evening.

Lebanon: Al-Hirawi, al-Hariri Predict Election Delay To Be Brief

NC0808175096 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President al-Hirawi told deputies that were visiting him that elections will not be delayed for more than one or two weeks at the most, after all arrangements are finalized and the new election law is issued after amendments are made to it. While he confirmed that the issue of separation of powers was evident in the recent decision, he noted that the Constitutional Council had exceeded its authority.

The prime minister confirmed before he went to B'abda Palace that it is not possible to postpone the elections for eight months and that the delay will be short one the new draft of the election law is prepared and discussed in the Council of Ministers and then referred to the Chamber of Deputies.

Al-Hariri revealed that a meeting of the three leaders will be held tomorrow in B'abda Palace and that the Council of Ministers has been called to an extraordinary meeting tomorrow evening to study the matter and present alternative proposals.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Terms Southern Lebanon, Syrian Golan One Issue

NC0908061296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri met in Damascus yesterday with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam. Syrian Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi and Foreign Minister Faruq al- Shar' attended the meeting. Al-Hariri said the consultations were part of the intensive, ongoing, and in-depth coordination between the two fraternal countries, Lebanon and Syria, with a view to serving their common interests and destiny. He said Presidents Ilyas al-Hirawi and Hafiz al-Asad stressed the need to continue and intensify this firm coordination during their latest meeting.

The prime minister said he discussed the results of recent Lebanese and Syrian contacts with various Arab and non-Arab parties concerned with the peace process and issues related to the work of the international committee emanating from the April understanding on southern Lebanon. Answering a question, al-Hariri stressed that Lebanon cannot accept proposals that negatively affect its rights. He said southern Lebanon and the Golan constitute a single item in any calculations concerning the security and stability of the region. On the Lebanese parliamentary elections, al-Hariri said the elections will certainly take place soon.

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Lebanon: Court Annuls Election Law Articles; Al-Hariri on Delay

NC0808121396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Ilyas al-Hirawi, Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri, and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri have received copies of the Constitutional Council's ruling, which contested the election law. [passage omitted]

The Constitutional Council today issued Decision No. 64 dated 7 August 1996, unanimously adopted by all its members. The decision annuls new articles 2 and 30 of Law No. 530, dated 11 July 1996 and published in issue No. 29 dated 12 July 1996 of the official gazette—the law on electing Chamber of Deputies members. The Constitutional Council also invalidated articles 1, 3, 4, and 5 of the same law because they are associated with contested articles 2 and 30. The Council judged that all these articles are unconstitutional. [passage omitted]

After the decision was issued, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri stressed that the possibility of delaying the parliamentary elections for eight months, as reported by some news media, is out of the question. He said the elections will be delayed only for a short, limited period so that a new draft of the election law can be prepared, discussed at the Council of Ministers, and referred to the Chamber of Deputies. He said that the elections will take place and that things have not returned to point zero.

Al-Hariri noted that the three leaders will meet at the Presidential Palace at noon tomorrow to discuss the issue. He also announced that the Council of Ministers was invited to an extraordinary meeting at B'abda Palace tomorrow afternoon to discuss the subject and review alternative proposals. He said the Constitutional Council's ruling decisively shows that the Chamber of Deputies and the government are neutral and that the principle of the separation of powers is being respected. He praised the role of the Constitutional Council in this regard.

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Syria: Talas Visits Camp, Voices Adherence to Peace Process

JN0808195296 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 8 Aug 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At the instructions of President Hafiz al-Asad, commander in chief of the Army and Armed Forces, General Mustafa Talas, deputy commander in chief of the Army and Armed Forces, deputy prime minister, and defense minister, visited an army formation. He was accompanied by Lieutenant General 'Ali Aslan, deputy chief of staff of the Army and Armed Forces, and several senior command officers. [passage omitted]

Addressing the fighters on the peace process in the region, Gen. Talas asserted that Syria adheres to the peace process and its bases and is eager under President Hafiz al-Asad's leadership to continue this process in light of the principles of the international legitimacy, particularly the principle of land for peace. Quoting President Hafiz al-Asad during the president's news conference with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Cairo, Gen. Talas said: We adhere to the peace process based on UN resolutions, the land-for- peace principle, and the bases that were drawn up. We also stick to the accords and commitments, which have been approved over the past five years.

Tackling the so-called Israeli Lebanon First proposal, Gen. Talas said that it is wicked, tricky, and useless and that it is rejected by the Arabs and Lebanon. He said: If the peace process is to continue and achieve its goals, the negotiations should, as the president said, be Lebanon and Syria first and that both countries should be treated equally in this regard. At the end of the visit, Gen. Talas and his companions were accorded a warm send-off ceremony.

Syria: Alexandria Summit Shows 'True Desire' for Peace

JN0808183896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1136 GMT 8 Aug 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The Alexandria summit between Presidents al-Asad and Mubarak came as a strong declaration to the Arabs and the world that the Cairo summit of late June was the harbinger of a fresh, powerful, forceful, and comprehensive Arab stand based on coordination and pooling the nation's resources to confront the dangers posed to it due to the Israeli policy, which has failed to heed the international community' keenness to render the peace process a success on the basis of the terms of reference agreed upon in Madrid. This triggered great international concern over the future of the peace process.

Thus, at the joint news conference held at the conclusion of the Alexandria summit yesterday, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad pointed out to the Arab and international public, and to whomever is concerned about the cause of peace in the region, that the offer made by the new Israeli Government does not open even a small window of opportunity for peace, that the Israeli call for resuming the talks does not reflect an eagerness for peace, and that resuming the peace process without heeding its terms of reference and in the absence of firm ground rules will get us nowhere. This is because the peace championed by Syria, as His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad said, is a peace grounded in the relevant UN resolutions and the land-for-peace formula.

The current Israeli Government considers these resolutions and this formula as preconditions it rejects as terms of reference for the peace process, even though the former Israeli Government engaged in this process on the basis of these terms.

The Israeli Government's offer shows a lack of seriousness, and a lack of true desire for peace, particularly since it said that it is upholding the peace-for-peace notion, and that it accords greater importance to security than to peace. In this regard, President Husni Mubarak said that it is peace that leads to security and that it will be difficult to promote security in the absence of peace.

Israel's offer to resume the talks has shown Israel's lack of seriousness, for this offer was floated in a vacuum. Israel wants the talks to resume without heeding any terms of reference or ground rules. Moreover, the Israeli Government's Lebanon First proposal has shown the familiar Israeli tactics to weaken the Arab position. The government and people of fraternal Lebanon, which is fully aware of Israel's intentions, has rejected this noxious Israeli idea, because peace has to be comprehensive.

In this regard, at the news conference, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad said: We are floating the Lebanon and Syria First proposal. Both tracks must be engaged at the same time. Progress on both tracks must go hand in hand.

Thus, the meeting between Presidents al-Asad and Mubarak in Alexandria yesterday addressed the issues that concern all Arabs, for the two presidents answered the questions posed by the Arab and world public on the peace process and regional affairs. This is the Arab stand that really seeks peace. The Alexandria summit yesterday declared, based on great respect

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for peace and absolute eagerness to safeguard Arab rights and international interests in this region, that the party that actually and honestly seeks peace must base its positions on the relevant resolutions of the international community, the terms of reference of the Madrid conference, and the land-for-peace formula.

Syria: Press Says Country Prepared To Resume Peace Process

JN0908101696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 9 Aug 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-BA'TH discusses the importance of the meeting held by Presidents al-Asad and Mubarak. This meeting was part of the policy of coordination between Damascus and Cairo at the highest level to support Arab rights and to shape an Arab position, through which Arabs can attain and defend all their rights.

The paper says: In his news conference with President Mubarak, President al-Asad underlined Syria's adherence to the peace process on the basis of the Madrid conference and the land-for-peace formula. He also stressed that resuming the peace process without proper groundwork will not yield any results and that Netanyahu's proposal does not lead to peace.

AL-BA'TH says: It is well known that the road to peace is very clear. There are international resolutions that must be respected as a basic condition to resume the peace talks. International resolutions and the land-for-peace formula provide the proper groundwork for the resumption of peace talks. Any evasion of the principles of peace will pose a threat to the peace process.

The paper believes the Israeli proposal to resume the peace talks is part of an old Israeli plan that aims to deal separately with each Arab party because this will be to Israel's benefit.

AL-BA'TH adds: Syria, which seeks to achieve a just and comprehensive peace, has always warned against incomplete solutions. Therefore, President al-Asad's reply in Alexandria the day before yesterday was decisive and precise, when he said: Lebanon and Syria first, at the same time and with the same steps.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Thus, leader al-Asad made it clear that we are not in a hurry. When things are ready, with their sound conditions, we will be ready to resume the peace process. Syria cannot accept separate and partial solutions. It will continue to insist on achieving a peace that is based on justice and comprehensiveness.

On the same subject, AL-THAWRAH says: The importance of the Syrian-Egyptian summit, convened in Alexandria the day before yesterday, stems from the fact that it was held in the midst of regional, Arab, and international developments that greatly influence conditions in the region and the future of the peace process. These developments make it imperative for the two brotherly countries to continue coordination and consultations, maintain the unity of the Arab position, and preserve joint Arab action, which was emphasized in the Cairo Arab summit. This joint Arab action must be activated to face the current conditions, the new challenges, and the positions adopted by Netanyahu's government, which reflect defiance, arrogance, haughtiness, intransigence, and a negative attitude toward peace and its terms of reference.

AL-THAWRAH stresses that the understanding between Damascus and Cairo and the great weight the two countries carry and the pioneering role they play in the pan-Arab arena make this a particularly remarkable meeting, on which the Arab masses, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf, pin great hopes.

The paper adds: The statements made by President al-Asad at the news conference with President Mubarak at the conclusion of these talks were very decisive and clear. He underlined the firm Syrian position that rejects the logic of extortion and all of the Israeli falsehoods and proposals that violate international unanimity, the resolutions of international legitimacy, the principles and terms of reference of the Madrid conference, and the land-for-peace formula.

The paper concludes: As President al-Asad affirmed, we in Syria adhere to the peace process on the basis of the UN resolutions and the land-for-peace formula. We also stick to the agreements and commitments that were decided in the past five years. On that basis, we are prepared to resume the peace process.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: It is now time to put an end to the deceptive and endless Israeli maneuvers. It is also time to give way to the peace process to allow it to arrive at its goal of establishing a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of the Madrid conference. This is a task that must be shouldered by the entire international community and the peace process cosponsors, particularly the United States. This task must also be shouldered by the Arabs. Everyone must fulfill his responsibility toward establishing a genuine peace by implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy and the U.S. peace initiative and by forcing Israel to yield to them. In turn, Arabs must implement the resolutions of the Cairo Arab summit in a manner

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that will achieve the desired peace and realize the effective Arab force that can face challenges.

Syria: U.S. Sanctions on Iran, Libya, Cuba Criticized

JN0908114896 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0900 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 9 Aug (SANA)—The newspaper AL-BA'TH says that the action by the incumbent U.S. Administration just before the presidential election, is political muscle-flexing in order to rally more support in an election campaign where the two candidates are running neck and neck.

In the "With the Events" column today, the paper says: U.S. President Bill Clinton's administration has forgotten to take into account the nature of the European reaction, which, according to French President Jacques Chirac, might be stronger than the U.S. President anticipated. President Chirac threatened to take vindictive measures and issue laws that are no less effective than the two laws issued by the U.S. Administration to penalize companies that deal with Cuba, Iran, and Libya.

The paper points out that the two U.S. laws caused tension in relations between Washington on the one hand and the EU, Canada, and Australia on the other, renewing the possibility of the outbreak of a bitter trade war between these countries and the United States. The paper asks: What is the United States seeking to achieve? Do its politicians really believe that major powers would stand idly by watching such a blatant interference in their affairs and surrender their wealth to Uncle Sam?

The paper concludes: If the United States was defeated both politically and militarily in a small, poor country like Somalia, can it stop the European giant merely by issuing void resolutions?

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Slams 'Unnecessary U.S. Interference,' Thanks Iran

LD0808182396 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto 0730 GMT 8 Aug 96 to Afghanistan

[FBIS Translated Text] Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani expressed his appreciation to esteemed Ala'eddin Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for his visits to various parts of Afghanistan in pursuit of a solution to the country's problems [words indistinct]

This point was made by Rabbani during an interview with an IRNA correspondent. The visits by Borujerdi to various parts of Afghanistan and his discussions with the leaders of the jihadi groups, played a useful role and we regard them as a positive step in finding a solution to the country's problems.

In denouncing the unnecessary U.S. interference in the affairs of Afghanistan, he said during the interview: The United States supports the warmongering and oppositionist groups within Afghanistan, including the Taleban. In providing them with political and military assistance, the United States is actually fuelling the devastating war in our country.

Rabbani hoped that the Pakistani government, as an Islamic and neighboring country, would play a major role in ending the fighting in Afghanistan and restoring security in our country.

Afghanistan: Party Leader Alleges Government Supports Terrorists

NC0808184996 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 5 Aug 96 p 9

[Interview with Pir Seyyed Ahmad Gailani, leader of the Jebhe-ye Melli-ye Eslami-ye Afghanistan, by Fathi Abu-al-Hamd in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Abu-al-Hamd] Hekmatyar took over as prime minister almost one month ago. How do you view this period?

[Gailani] I am against the Hekmatyar government. I reject it and will work to bring it down. His practices during this month confirm his dictatorial and backward personality. Starvation and destruction have spread even though there is food. His strange decision to close the cinemas and ban music confirms that he is a religious extremist.

[Abu-al-Hamd] What is your opinion of the Afghan government's relations with Muslim extremists?

[Gailani] I believe that the Muslim extremists have their own camps which are financed by Usamah Bin-Ladin. President Rabbani is providing them with facilities and camps in accordance with some agreement between him and Bin-Ladin. It is Hekmatyar who is the specialist in training extremists to fight. He allocated four regions to shelter the extremists—in Kabul, Paktia, (Konardokhab), and Kandahar.

[Abu-al-Hamd] How many extremists are in Afghanistan?

[Gailani] There are now between 5,000 and 10,000 extremists being trained to use the most modern weapons. After being brainwashed by Bin-Ladin's followers, they are sent to their countries to carry out sabotage and destruction.

[Abu-al-Hamd] If you take power in your country, what will be your policy toward these extremists?

[Gailani] I believe that the extremists in Afghanistan are like a wild horse that destroys everything and are the direct cause for the state the country has reached. Therefore I will expel these extremists from Afghanistan.

[Abu-al-Hamd] This means that you will not hand them over to their countries?

[Gailani] I will not hand them over to anyone but will expel them from our country to anywhere they want to go to in order to rid the country of their evils.

[Abu-al-Hamd] Have you met with Bin-Ladin?

[Gailani] I have never met him in my life nor do I know him. But I learned from my followers that he is in Afghanistan moving between Kabul and Paktia in the south of the country.

Afghanistan: Spokesman Rejects Rumors About Terrorist Bases, Centers

LD0808192496 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There is no base or center of any kind for terrorist elements in territory under government control.

In rejecting some mass media propaganda, and the concern expressed by some nations about the presence of terrorist bases in the territory under the control of the Islamic state, a foreign ministry spokesman said today: As far as the Afghan government is concerned it desires good and friendly relations with all countries, particularly Islamic countries. At no time, or under any circumstances, does [the government] permit terrorist activity

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against any country. Not only does the government not support terrorism but it categorically denounces it.

The foreign ministry spokesman added: The Afghan people themselves for many years now have been the victims of terrorism, which is encouraged, supplied with arms, and financed from abroad. This process still continues and daily a number of our defenceless people are actually killed by the terrorists groups. [12 second break in reception]

It should be mentioned that since the inception of the Islamic government, some foreign elements, including terrorists, have taken part in the fighting against the Islamic government alongside the armed opposition groups [words indistinct].

The Foreign Ministry spokesman also said in his statement that it was not impossible that such elements were still present amongst the antigovernment groups. However, we categorically declare that such elements have no center or base of activity in any area under state control. If there is any doubt in this respect, the government invites the relevant sides to visit the areas under government control. The government will give full cooperation in this respect.

The spokesman expressed the hope that such kinds of difficulties [suspicions] would never arise after the restoration of peace and security in the country. Other countries must assist the people of Afghanistan in this respect.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Foreign Minister Sees No Need To Renew Treaty With India

BK0408130396 Dhaka Bangladesh Radio Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 4 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The 25-year-old Bangladesh-India Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation ends on 18 March 1997. In view of the prevailing regional and global political situation, the Bangladesh Government does not feel any need now to renew the agreement. This was stated by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad during the parliament session that resumed today with Deputy Speaker Advocate Abdul Hamid in the chair. The foreign minister read out a full description of the agreement.

In reply to a follow-up question, the foreign minister expressed the hope that Bangladesh will receive its share of Ganges River water this year. He stressed the need for a permanent water-sharing agreement between Bangladesh and India.

In reply to another question, the foreign minister said that, according to 1971 figures, Bangladesh's share of Pakistani assets amounted to more than 24 billion Pakistani rupees. No solution could be reached thus far, despite negotiations at various levels. Of course, diplomatic efforts are continuing in this regard, the foreign minister added. [passage omitted]

India

India: BJP, SJP Support Government Stand on CTBT

BK0908092396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Samajwadi Janata Party [SJP] and the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] have supported the government's stand on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, CTBT. The SJP general secretary, Mr. Satya Prakash Malaviya, said in Allahabad that India should not bow before international pressure in respect of this discriminatory treaty. The BJP leader, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, said India's decision not to sign the CTBT is in our national interest. Both the leaders expressed the hope that the government will stick to its present stand on this issue in the UN General Assembly also.

India: Radio Reports Envoy's Talks With Christopher on CTBT

BK0908043196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The U.S. secretary of state, Mr. Warren Christopher, has urged India not to block the proposed Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT]. Mr. Christopher made the call during his meeting with India's ambassador to the United States, Mr. Naresh Chandra, in Washington. The U.S. [State] Department spokesman quoted Mr. Christopher telling Mr. Naresh Chandra that if India cannot sign the treaty, it should not at least veto it. Mr. Christopher also handed over a letter addressed to the external affairs minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral. The Indian Embassy press release in Washington did not reveal the contents of the letter. It, however, said Mr. Christopher and Mr. Naresh Chandra discussed the current stage of negotiations for the CTBT. The embassy said both the sides also discussed the growing economic and commercial ties between India and the United States. They expressed the hope that this welcome trend would continue.

As already reported, India has reiterated that it will block the treaty if the draft is not changed to provide for complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a definite timeframe. The Pakistani prime minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, said in Islamabad yesterday that her

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country would not sign the CTBT unless India does so first.

India: Article Criticizes U.S. for CTBT Pressure

BK0708123296 Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 6 Aug 96 p 4

[Article by Prabhash Joshi]

[FBIS Translated Text] India does not want the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, CTBT, to be blocked despite its objections. The Indian representative, Arundhati Ghosh, has reiterated this quite categorically during the Geneva negotiations. Others may sign it, but India cannot accept the proposal in its existing form under any condition.

Despite this categorical statement why are the United States, its press, and some European countries launching a tirade against India and blaming it for blocking the treaty? Why do they allege that the country, whose leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, were the first to raise their voice for total disarmament, is refusing to sign this treaty to ban nuclear tests? When this malicious tirade, accompanied by sermons on the morality of the nuclear issue failed, the U.S. Secretary of State gave a direct warning to India that the United States would not allow one single country to block the treaty. They are quoting Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru in their attempts to teach moral lessons to India. This is akin to Satan quoting scriptures!

Neither the CTBT, nor the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] has anything to do with disarmament. Neither of them contain total elimination of the nuclear weapons as its objective. The basic purpose of these treaties is to ensure the nuclear monopoly of the nuclear powers, which already possess these fatal nuclear arms and now wish to enjoy the unbridled right to improve their strike power. At the same time, they want to deprive the non-nuclear countries from developing nuclear capability, or from having the right to keep their nuclear weapons effective by conducting nuclear tests. The two treaties are basically devised to serve this twin purpose of the Nuclear Powers.

Nevertheless, the vilifying propaganda is on. It claims India is creating a hurdle in an important step towards the aim of total disarmament! This baseless and malicious tirade is being intensified, particularly against India because the United States believes that the CTBT would be meaningless if India stays out of it. If India refuses to sign it, Pakistan is sure to follow suit and in that event even Israel may not sign the treaty. If these three pivotal countries refuse to sign it, the very purpose of the treaty would stand defeated, because the main objective of this treaty is not to curb the nuclear ambitions of the nuclear powers or to make them agree to destroy their nuclear pile, but instead to check the "threshold" countries like India, Pakistan, and Israel from becoming full-fledged nuclear powers.

There is a clause in the treaty that is very specific. It says that unless all eight countries (the five powers: the United States, Russia, France, Britain, and China, and the three threshold powers: India, Pakistan, and Israel) ratify the treaty it cannot be enforced. Three years after the signing, there will be a conference of the signatory countries in which, by consensus of opinion and in accordance with international laws, the treaty's future course of action would be decided. It would be given formal shape and made more effective; this procedure is termed: "Entry-Into-Force" and it is this part of the treaty to which India has the strongest objection. According to this clause it is imperative that the three 'threshold' countries, including India, must sign the treaty. If India refuses to sign it, then after three years, the rest of the signatory countries would collectively find a measure that may force India to sign the treaty. In other words, irrespective of India's not accepting or not signing the treaty, it would have to abide by the treaty rules. If it does not, then the other signatories would impose severe restrictions on India as a punitive measure.

Of all the international treaties, this treaty is most amazing. Normally a country is only bound by a treaty when it has accepted it. It cannot be punished for disregarding a treaty that it has not signed. This treaty hopes to bind India to its rules even though India refuses to accept it. How can a treaty punish a country that refuses to sign it? What sort of arbitrary provision is this? One may accept it or not, but either way it is bound by it? This treaty is not only a document manifesting reprehensible international arbitrariness, but it also challenges the sovereignty of a nation by trying to force it to accept something that is clearly injurious to its national interest.

The two suggestions that India proposed to amend the treaty's draft-proposal and make it a logical document have been rejected by the so-called arbiters of the treaty, ie — the Nuclear Powers. First they do not consider the proposal that seeks elimination of the existing nuclear pile through a time-bound program to be even 'practical' — as the response of the United States was. Secondly, the Indian suggestion that in the event of India not signing the treaty, it must have the option of staying clear of the treaty and thereby beyond any punitive action against it has also been rejected outright. These suggestions were not acceptable to the nuclear powers because they disturbed their ulterior design of ensuring their nuclear monopoly forever. The very objective of

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this treaty is to keep the threshold countries — India, Pakistan, and Israel — forever non-nuclear. That is why the provision has been made in the draft-proposal that the treaty be valid only if these three countries sign it.

The tirade against India that has been launched by the U.S. and European press is also motivated by the nuclear countries. That is why they allege that India is blocking this 'supremely meritorious' measure for purely selfish reasons; however, the fact is that the condition that this treaty shall not be valid unless India and the other two 'threshold' countries sign it, is not India's imposition, but the handiwork of the nuclear powers. It clearly means that these nuclear despots want to corner India by all means possible. If India wants to stay clear of the treaty, these nations still want India punished with severe sanctions. This is nothing short of planned international hooliganism. India must never sign a treaty that severely damages its national interest, even if the whole world is pressuring it. Safeguarding its national interests and security is the prime consideration for any country and India must not deviate from this norm under any circumstances.

There are, however, many 'prudent' and 'rational' well-wishers of India inside and outside of the country whose considered opinion is that there is no sense in having the nuclear option, which we cannot use at all. Even if we use the nuclear option and manage to make a few nuclear bombs what purpose will those bombs be serving? It has been proven by modern warfare that these nuclear weapons hardly serve the purpose of deterring adversaries from launching their attach on us, as they claim. These so-called well-wishers have also favored India's signing the NPT as well. They claim that we have no technological and economic resources to make nuclear bombs and missiles that are capable of launching nuclear bombs to Chinese or Pakistani territories. Secondly, even if we do manage to develop them, we still cannot beat China in the nuclear field. China is so far advanced in this sphere that we cannot match it no matter what we do. As far as Pakistan is concerned, we can easily cope with it with the help of only the traditional arms. Hence our keeping the nuclear option open is not going to serve any purpose either militarily or economically.

These so-called 'peace-protagonists' and 'practical thinkers' remind us that the treaty to ban nuclear tests that Jawaharlal Nehru had proposed in 1954 also touched on maintaining the status quo of nuclear matters. He also suggested that no additional nuclear weapons should be created. Even then no nuclear power accepted that proposed treaty. Since then, three more members have joined the Nuclear Club, and the biggest violator of any treaty is none other than today's superpower — the United States.

From 1945 to the present day, these five nuclear powers have collectively conducted 2,047 nuclear tests. Out of these, more than half — 1032 — were conducted by the United States alone. Russia has conducted 715, France 210, Britain, and China 45 each. The Nehru proposal failed to inspire any of these powers to maintain the status quo obtained in 1954. Now these nuclear powers are reminding India that even Nehru favored status quo in the nuclear weapons' provision.

Among these so called 'peace lovers' and 'rationalists' most of them work for the U.S. style of disarmament and receive aid from external sources. Added to their lot are also those 'leftists' who have sympathy for China and Russia. They also advise India that it should follow the line adopted by China and Russia and forgo its nuclear option. Internally they fear that should India manage to develop the required resources for making nuclear weapons and deploy them against China and Pakistan, the country is likely to be overwhelmed by a flamboyantly aggressive nationalism that will definitely strengthen the Bharatiya Janata Party's hold on the country. That inherent fear is one of the guiding factors of their advice to India to act with prudence and practical sense, lest we lose at both the fronts: moral and strategic. Using the nuclear option is sure to make us end up in this position. Such an imprudent action will not only make us isolated in world politics, but we would also suffer economically on account of various sanctions and restrictions. We will also lose our stature in world politics.

Apart from these 'rationalists' and 'peace lovers' we have the U.S. press and leaders questioning India's competence to attempt total nuclear capability and advising it that India must first remove the poverty of its people, and provide them with basic amenities. Only then should it attempt to become a nuclear power. This game has no room for the weak and poor.

They maintain that making the nuclear bomb and establishing, or de-establishing, the military equilibrium of the world is to preserve the powerful and rich countries. They advise India to stop giving sermons to the powerful nations on morality and to strive to rid itself of its fear of Pakistan and China. They say by joining the treaty India's security will be safe. It does not behoove India to waste its resources in making the bomb, which is not going to serve any purpose, they advise.

These arguments of U.S. leaders, the U.S. press, and our own 'rationalists' and the 'peace-lovers' might appeal to the middle class, which seems to be flourishing in

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the free market economy and does not want to risk its prosperity with India by falling in total isolation. This 200 million strong and prosperous middle class forms the very basis of the tempting market of the multinational companies. For this class, the question of the country's sovereignty and independence does not take precedence over its luxurious livings. The members of this class have become too callous to care for those superior values that goad the citizens to even sacrifice their life for the nation's cause.

If these so called 'rationalists', 'peace-lovers','lotus-eaters' and 'epicures' could have their say they would have made our country a mere protege of some superpower. They would have no objection whatsoever in India becoming a purchasable commodity for Western traders. They have no qualms about India becoming a huge market for the Western economy and Western thinking. They do not know that the very criterion of a country's sovereignty and independence is its capacity to discern what is good or bad for it and to chart its own course of destiny. To have the option of deciding our own future is the prime condition of retaining our independence. The same is true in case of the nuclear option. It is our sweet will to use it any time that is convenient to the U.S. It is exclusively our own business and no one has any right to interfere. Under the present condition, retaining our nuclear option is warranted by the consideration of our independence and sovereignty. By forgoing it under any pressure we shall only be pawning our very existence in the hands of a foreign power or an alien group.

Hence we must declare categorically in Geneva that unless the nuclear powers come up with a specific, time bound program of liquidating their nuclear pile and pressuring India to sign this blatantly discriminatory CTBT, we shall not allow it to be enforced at all. We shall also defeat the designs of the nuclear powers to send this treaty's draft-proposal for its endorsement by the UN General Assembly despite India's protest. After all, not even the UN has the right to manipulate a country's freedom and sovereignty or violate it. It cannot.

India: BJP Demands 'Two Nuclear Tests' To Develop Warheads

BK0808115396 Madras THE HINDU in English 8 Aug 96 p 7

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], today demanded that India should 'immediately' go ahead with 'one or two nuclear tests' to help develop 'nuclear warheads for our missiles.' The party has said any delay on this score would endanger national security.

The party has categorically stated that India should go ahead with nuclear tests and the implication is that it should declare itself a nuclear power. The BJP has demanded that the Deve Gowda government should lose no time in taking a decision on this.

Mr. Brijesh Mishra, member of the BJP's cell on foreign affairs, was critical of the Government's stand on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. He said the Indian stand that it would block the treaty if the entry-into-force provisions are not changed to delete the requirement of India's adherence to the treaty was not 'good enough.' The draft treaty itself was 'defective' even if the entry-into-force provisions were changed.

It was not clear what Mr. Mishra was objecting to in the case of a treaty which would not apply to India at all or bind it in any way. He was not able to say specifically how the BJP stand differed from that taken by the Government, except that later he 'demanded' that India 'immediately' go ahead with nuclear tests.

Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Mishra pointed out that India had two nuclear neighbours — China, a declared nuclear power, and Pakistan with its clandestine nuclear programme. Both these countries, he noted, had been aggressors against this country and in such a vitiated security environment India could no longer afford the luxury of waiting to develop its own nuclear programme. "The longer we wait, the more dangerous will it be for us, and the longer we delay (carrying out nuclear tests), the more pressure will be brought on us." he said.

J&K [Jammu and Kashmir] poll announcement welcomed

The party has welcomed the announcement of dates of elections in Jammu and Kashmir, but has warned of 'renewed interference' by the United States. Mr. Mishra commented on the recent visit to the Valley by the U.S. Ambassador, Mr. Frank Wisner, and said the Indian Government should not have allowed this visit to a sensitive State. He pointed out that not only did he meet the State authorities but also 'other elements' and this was a cause of concern.

Mr. Mishra noted that just before this visit Mr. Wisner went to Pakistan, met its Prime Minister and the result of that visit was 'a renewed call by Pakistan for U.S. mediation.'

The party has also criticised the visit to Kashmir by the U.S. Senator. Mr. Hank Brown 'who is a known

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Pakistan supporter' and 'who favours Pressler type sanctions against India.'

The BJP has demanded that the Government stop such visits which, it feels, can only facilitate interference in our internal affairs.

In response to a question, Mr. Mishra said he was happy that the External Affairs Minister, Mr. J.K. Gujral, had rebuffed Mr. Brown by not meeting him.

To go it alone in J&K

PTI reports: Welcoming the announcement of the poll schedule for the troubled border State, the party spokesman, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, said the party would fight the elections on its own strength.

He appealed to the Election Commission and the Government to ensure a free and fair elections so that the people of the State could exercise their democratic rights and have an elected Government after a gap of many years.

India: Official Urges Country To Go Ahead With Defense Programs

BK0808123596 Madras THE HINDU in English 8 Aug 96 p 5

[Article by Kalam: "India Must Go Ahead With Defence Programmes"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister and Secretary, Department of Defence Research and Development, Ministry of Defence, has stressed the need for India to go ahead with its defence research programmes unmindful of the pressure being exerted by America and others.

Delivering the Prof. Y. Nayudamma Memorial Lecture on Technology Vision at the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology here on Wednesday [7 August] at a function organised by the Andhra Pradesh Akademi of Sciences, Dr. Kalam said India had to go ahead with its scientific and technological programmes, even in the field of defence research, if it had to acquire the tag "a developed country."

Dr. Kalam said countries like the U.S. and Russia and their allies possessed 10,000 war heads plus ballistic missiles each apart from biological and chemical warfares and proliferating weapons and they now wanted other countries to sign ban treaties.

Describing technological strength as political and economical strength, Dr. Abdul Kalam said sustained efforts for developing core competence should be made and the prospects could be found in the young scientists in the country.

Strategical industrial infrastructure and self-reliance in critical technology was essential for the realisation of the country's dreams.

Detailing the development of countries and their priorities, he said human warfare had come to the stage of economic warfare via weapons warfare in a short period. The present weapon was controlling market forces and the wars were being fought with high technology.

Explaining the Government's plans in this direction, he said The Vision 2020 programme prepared recently by the country envisaged the growth of the country in all directions — from farming to missile technology, field of life sciences to industry — and the goal set before the scientific community was to achieve 70 percent self-reliance in indigenous systems from the present 30 percent by 2005 A.D. However, the cost of research and development in the country was only one tenth of what it was elsewhere, he added.

Earlier, Dr. Abdul Kalam was awarded the Prof. Y. Nayudumma Gold Medal for the distinguished scientist by Prof. A.K. Rao, Director, Engineering Staff College of India.

Dr. Kalam gave away young scientists awards of the AP Akademi of Sciences to Dr. D. Ravinder, Dr. S. Chandrashekhar, Dr. P. Rama Krishna, Dr. C. Varadarajulu Naidu, Dr. Venkata Ramana and Mr. Anand Prakash Singh.

India: DRDO Proposes Development Tests for Agni

BK0808144896 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 8 Aug 96 p 9

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A proposal for carrying out development flights of 'Agni' — India's intermediate range ballistic missile — has been submitted to the Government, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister disclosed today, reports UNI.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has written to the Prime Minister calling for development tests of Agni, he told reporters here.

Kalam said that after the successful technology demonstration of the 2500-mile range missile system last year, development flights of Agni would begin this year. "We are now free as we have refused to sign the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty]," he said and added there was no question of shelving the Agni project.

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Asked about the recent induction of Chinese-made M-11 missiles by Pakistan, Kalam said while it was a matter of concern, India had enough capability and would undertake all measures to counter the threat.

Kalam said there was 'no problem' in inducting 'Arjun,' the main battle tank (MBT), into the Indian Army. The MBT had undergone field trials and would be handed over to the Army, he added.

Earlier, delivering the Prof Nayudamma Memorial Lecture on 'Technology Vision,' he said indigenisation of Defence production would be raised from the present 30 percent to 70 percent by 2005 AD.

The light combat aircraft (LCA) would be ready for commercial production by 2003. India had resorted to 'consortium approach' in producing Defence components in the wake of embargoes like the Missile Testing Control Regime (MTCR).

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) too had resorted to such approaches as it was refused cryogenic engines for its space programme, he added.

Kalam said a hi-tech gallium foundry would be set up here within the next five years to provide material for the manufacture of missile, aircraft and other integrated Defence needs.

The gallium arsenide foundry, a joint venture of Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory (DMRL) and the Chandigarh-based Semi Conductor Complex, was under construction now, DMRL director S L Nacharyulu told UNI.

Saying that the country plans to invest in critical technology and components to meet future needs, Kalam said work was underway at a city based Defence lab to develop super computer of one 'gega flops' capacity.

India: Article Notes 'Unprecedented' Treatment for U.S. Envoy

BK0808121296 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 8 Aug 96 p 11

[Article by Shubha Singh: "No Longer a Warm Welcome"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Americans have been making a number of visits to Jammu and Kashmir, and the most recent and well publicised ones have been by the US Ambassador Frank Wisner followed by US Senator Hank Brown whose name has become familiar to Indian newspaper readers because of the Amendment which carries his name, that resulted in a huge arms transfer to Pakistan.

The wide publicity and the high level of access to State Government circles given to the US envoy had its effect in New Delhi. Members of both houses of Parliament involving almost all sections strongly criticised the visit in an unusual display of like-mindedness.

However, the two visiting Americans have not received the kind of receptions that were the norm till just a short while ago. The Government took a conscious decision to allow Senator Brown to visit Jammu and Kashmir, though the conventional wisdom in many circles would have been to keep such a strong critic of India out of the troubled State. The United Front Government's decision is said to be in keeping with the policy of transparency initiated in the State for some time.

American officials travelling to Srinagar used to be accorded the status of saviours in the city, because Washington's stance on the Kashmir issue under the Clinton Administration was seen to be sympathetic to the secessionist point of view. But a slight shift in the US Government stand with the improvement in the situation in the State has led to a cooling off, especially with the leaders of the All Party Hurriyat Conference. According to some observers, the Hurriyat leaders have been displaying a strong sense of disillusionment with the US position, ever since US officials failed to criticise the holding of Lok Sabha elections in the State.

Hurriyat leaders who enjoyed getting themselves photographed with American officials of all leavels, decided to keep clear of the US Ambassador, whose visit to Jammu and Kashmir last week was dismissed as a "pleasure seeking tour" by the Hurriyat leaders.

The Hurriyat leaders avoided a meeting with Mr Wisner, as they were upset at certain remarks made by the US envoy to India at a recent lecture in Quetta, Pakistan. Mr Wisner is reported to have said that Kashmiri leaders were in touch with the Government in New Delhi and made some positive comments on developments including the Lok Sabha elections in the State. These comments were taken amiss by the Hurriyat loaders, who decided to boycott the visit. Some of the Hurriyat leaders were strongly critical of Shabir Shah for meeting Mr Wisner, they described the meeting in strongly political as well as personal terms. They even said that Mr Shah was an insecure person so he readily went to meet everyone who came to Srinagar and be photographed with them.

Such treatment for the US Ambassador in Srinagar is unprecedented since even junior embassy officials are treated as VIPs. Incidentally, copies of Mr Wisner's speech has been made available in Srinagar in the recent days in an effort to correct the impression the Hurriyat leaders had formed about his lecture in Quetta.

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Though the Hurriyat leaders met Senator Hank Brown, who heads the Senate committee on Far East and South Asia, they have been careful in their reactions to the meeting. Senator Brown is a known India-baiter at Capital Hill. So the Kashmiri leaders he met gave him an assessment of the situation in the State as they viewed it.

According to some reports, it has been conveyed to the Kashmiri leaders on the subject of the proposed Legislative Assembly elections that though the field was muddy, they should play on it, for how else could an assessment of the real representatives of the people be made. For any democratic nation and its elected representatives, elections are the process which gives legitimacy to the Government in office. And even in a 'disputed area' elections are the process which identifies the leaders of the people — a factor which Washington cannot afford to ignore.

India: Ties With 'Greater Middle East' Viewed

BK0808144996 Madras THE HINDU in English 8 Aug 96 p 10

[Article by C. Raja Mohan: "India and the 'Greater Middle East'"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Has West Asia fallen off from the foreign policy priorities of Indian Diplomatic observers. There is a sense of growing weariness in New Delhi about West Asia that may have dampened India's traditional diplomatic activism in the region. Preoccupation with the Kashmir issue and Pakistan seemed to limit India's engagement of the region in the 1990s. Turning its back to the western part of Asia, New Delhi has begun to look East. The economic dynamism of South East Asia and the political stability in the region opened the doors for an Indian diplomacy that carried little political risk and a lot of economic benefit. There is a general feeling of satisfaction in New Delhi at the success of its diplomacy in the region, with its recent integration into political structures of the region such as the Asean and its security wing, the Regional Forum. As a large country located at the crossroads of Asia, India cannot remain content with movement in just one direction. India's self-perception as an emerging great power will remain hollow if it becomes a wall-flower in West Asia. The recent attention to South East Asia was an important correction to the long-standing neglect of this region. Focus on one part of Asia should not imply the neglect of other critical regions of the continent. West Asia, particularly the Gulf, is far too important for India to be ignored. It is a major market for Indian goods and the principal source of its oil Imports. Historically, it has been an integral part of India's neighbourhood. It remains a source of considerable foreign exchange remittances from the emigrant Indian.

The incipient rivalries in the region between the U.S. and Russia, on the one hand, and that between Washington and Beijing, on the other, could drive the strategic approach of these great powers towards India and Pakistan. Many issues that have an immediate and long term bearing on our security are rooted in the West Asian political dynamic. India's energy security and its access to oil at reasonable prices is inextricably linked to the political situation in the region. The Western pressures on New Delhi over nuclear and missile proliferation, that have taken up extraordinary amounts of Indian diplomatic energies in recent years, are rooted in the American fears about the consequences of the spread of mass destruction weapons in West Asia and the impact of South Asian proliferation on the region. The rising power and militant Islamist movements in the region have had global effects, and have a particular bearing on India.

The Gulf War in 1991 had dramatically transformed the political scene in the Middle East. The new situation had a number of elements. One, it marked the initiation of an intense peace process between Israel and the Arab States breaking long-standing political rigidities. Two, the U.S. acquired an unprecedented primacy in the region emerging as the principal power broker, the sole guardian of the oil riches, and the final arbiter of the security order in the Gulf. Three, Moscow retreated from the power politics of the region, and China has begun to make important forays into West Asia as the supplier of advanced weapons and strategic technologies. And, finally, the very concept of the region has been transformed with the emergence of the republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia as independent national entities. Western analysts now talk about the 'Greater Middle East' stretching from Marrakesh to Kazhakstan and Afghanistan as one vast region, popularly identified by Islam, oil, weak states and a potential for unending regional conflict and great power intervention.

After a period of relative quiescence, West Asia now appears to be getting ready for another bout of instability. The Arab-Israeli peace process is going through a difficult moment after the elections in Israel. The ruling regimes in West Asia are coming under great stress. Reduced revenues from oil exports, population pressures, and a growing social and political restiveness are taxing the current capabilities for governance in the region. Messianic forces, espousing anti-secular. and anti-Western ideologies, are gaining ground and threaten destabilisation. The heart of the oil riches in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, appears to be on the verge of

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a major political convulsion. The U.S. is beginning to feel the terrible political consequences of its enviable domination of the West Asian region. The U.S. policy of dual containment — of simultaneously squeezing the two largest States of the Gulf, Iran and Iraq — has begun to reveal its limits and contradictions. Meanwhile the Afghan turmoil continues, and a great Power rivalry over controlling oil resources in Central Asia appears to be shaping up.

It is not that India has ignored these developments. In fact it has made some important adjustments to its diplomatic posture in the so-called 'Greater Middle East'. In a dramatic break with past policy, New Delhi has opened full diplomatic relations with Israel and is now engaged in wide ranging bilateral cooperation, including the defence sector. It has participated in the West Asian consultations on regional arms control, as part of the peace process. India has restored functional cooperation with the Gulf Arab countries in the aftermath of the 1991 War and India's ambiguities during that conflict. The return of Indian workers in large numbers to the Gulf has been facilitated.

In an important initiative, India has opened tentative defence contacts with the Gulf States. During the Gulf War, India provided important military support — in the form of refuelling facilities — for American operations in the Gulf. Although New Delhi withdrew this support towards the end of the war, the cooperation during the war laid the basis for more broad based military exchanges with the U.S. and other Western powers. This has included expanded service to-service interact on and joint naval exercises with the Welt.

A major development in India's policy towards the region has been the effort to cultivate a special relationship with Iran. There is a growing awareness of the commonality of interests between India and Iran in promoting political stability in Afghanistan and in accessing and developing the markets in Central Asia. In Afghanistan itself, India's political position has significantly improved in recent years, with a new warmth between New Delhi and the new rulers in Kabul. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, New Delhi has adopted a posture of diplomatic activism.

None can dismiss the recent Indian record in West Asia as an insubstantial one. While it has not lagged behind in engagement, New Delhi may have fallen short in developing a comprehensive strategy towards the region. Observers notice a diplomatic hesitation in New Delhi in pursuing India's own interests to their logical end. While India has opened up towards Israel, there is still a defensiveness to the relationship. At the same time, there is also the sense among the Arab States that India has muted its voice in relation to the Arab-Israeli disputes. There is a feeling that India has not done all that it could in ending the current misery of the Iraqi people in the face of continuing sanctions from the United Nations. In seeking a partnership with Iran, India has had to constantly look over its shoulder about reactions from the U.S., thus limiting the prospects of a coherent approach towards Teheran. While India has initiated a defence relationship with the United States, there has been no clarity about India's long term objectives in that relationship.

The Indian tentativeness in West Asia can easily be explained by the larger difficulties India has confronted in adapting its foreign policy to the realities of the post-Cold War world. The burden of Kashmir too has weighed heavily on Indian diplomacy in recent years. The very nature of the circumstances on the ground in West Asia and the contradictory pulls and pressures in the region are extremely demanding on outside powers. Gains in one direction often lead to losses in another. The West Asian strategic environment is a punishing one and demands constant balancing of risks and gains. Nevertheless, as India comes to the end of a most difficult phase in the history of its foreign policy, the time may have come to impart a new dynamism to our interaction with West Asia. As a first step, the Foreign Minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, could initiate a thorough review of India's policies towards the 'Greater Middle East' and define the lines of a new activism in the region.

India: Prime Minister Asserts Free, Fair Elections in Kashmir

BK0808163296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has asserted that the ensuing assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be free and fair. Addressing the meet-the-press program at Bhubaneshwar Airport before leaving for Delhi, Mr. Deve Gowda said the center is determined to curb militancy in the state with an iron hand. He said the Army and the state administration have been directed to ensure that militancy is not allowed to raise its ugly head again. Replying to a variety of questions, the prime minister said Pakistan has not properly responded to his offer for official-level talks to sort out bilateral issues.

Earlier, speaking at the golden celebration of a Oriya daily in Bhubaneshwar, the prime minister called for collective work to reconstruct the country and restore the people's faith in the democratic system. Mr. Deve Gowda pointed out that although no political party has

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a clear mandate, the issues before the people should not be ignored.

Addressing a meeting of Janata Dal party workers, Mr. Deve Gowda reiterated the United Front's determination to implement the Common Minimum Program. He announced that a direct Indian Airlines flight would be introduced between Bhubaneshwar and Delhi from tomorrow. This will fulfill a longstanding demand of the state.

The prime minister laid the foundation of a new railway zonal headquarters of the newly-formed East Coast Railway at Bhubaneshwar. The zone has been formed by including Khurda, Sambalpur, and (Voltair) divisions. These divisions were earlier under the Southeastern Railway. On this occasion, the union railway minister, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, inaugurated the new zonal office.

India: Minister Assures Conducive Atmosphere for Kashmir Elections

BK0808165796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The home minister has assured the people of Jammu and Kashmir that every effort will be made to create a conducive atmosphere to enable them to exercise their franchise without any fear in the coming assembly elections. Mr. Indrajit Gupta was talking to a group of people in Baramula today. The minister, who is on a two-day visit to the state, also said that government will give protection and security to those who want to contest the elections and also to personnel on election duty.

Earlier on his arrival at Srinagar, the home minister had a high-level meeting with senior officers of the security forces and reviewed the law and order situation. The adviser to the state governor briefed the home minister about the steps taken for the peaceful conduct of assembly elections.

The National Conference leader, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, called on the home minister in Srinagar and held talks with him. Later talking to newsmen, he said his party's alliance with any other political party for the coming assembly elections will be decided by the working committee's meeting on Saturday [10 August]. According to UNI, he also said that National Conference will participate in the elections and would like to contest all the 87 seats.

Mr. Indrajit Gupta is accompanied by the minister of state for home, Mr. Mohammad Maqbul Dar, and other high officials.

A UNI report from Srinagar says the working committee of the All Party Kashmir Hurriyyat Conference suspended its executive committee member, Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah, from the party today. The secretary of the party in a press statement said that the decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the working committee in Srinagar. He said the step follows Mr. Shah's violating the collective decision of the party on certain issues.

India: Minister Reaffirms Pledge for Maximum Autonomy to Kashmir

BK0908060896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The home minister, Mr. Indrajit Gupta, has said that the United Front government is committed to grant maximum autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir, but it will not decide its quantum on its own. Addressing a press conference in Srinagar yesterday, Mr. Gupta said the issue should be discussed by the elected representatives of the people of the state. He said the people and the state administration are confident of peaceful assembly polls after the recent Lok Sabha elections.

In an interview broadcast on Radio Kashmir, Srinagar, last evening, the minister of state for home, Mr. Mohammad Maqbul Dar, urged the people to come out in large numbers to exercise their franchise. Mr. Indrajit Gupta and Mr. Maqbul Dar are visiting Doda and Jammu today on the second day of their two-day visit to survey the security situation in view of the coming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

India: PTV—Kashmiri Organizations Reject Indian Election Plans

BK0808161196 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC], other liberation-seeking political groups, and the mujahideen organizations have categorically rejected the four-phased assembly polls next month announced by the Indian Election Commission. The chairman of the APHC, Mirwaiz Omar Farooq, in a statement in Srinagar reiterated the Kashmiri people's stand that elections under the Indian Constitution could not be an alternative to the unmandated plebiscite. PTV special correspondent Ghulam Nabi Khayal reports on atrocities being perpetrated by Indian troops on innocent Kashmiris:

[Begin recording] In their preelection stepped-up activities, Kashmiri fighters killed one officer of the Border Security Force or BSF and injured three others when

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they lobbed a grenade at the Central Telegraph Office in Srinagar. The BSF subinspector, R.S. Rawa, succumbed to injuries while being taken to Army Hospital. Three soldiers guarding the vital installation were also injured. In Dal Gate in south Srinagar, two army men were wounded seriously when they were also attacked with a bomb thrown by the fighters. In Kokarbazar, one Indian soldier was killed when he was shot at from point blank by a fighter. He died on spot.

Meanwhile, the fanatic Hindu outfit, Bajrang Dal, has threatened that no Indian Muslim shall be allowed to perform hajj pilgrimage in case the Amarnath yatra [Hindu pilgrimage] was disturbed in Kashmir later this month. Bajrang Dal secretary said in Allahabad that more than 50,000 Dal activists are scheduled to join the yatra in Kashmir and that the Hindus shall now adopt a tit for tat policy against anti-Hindu forces.

Ghulam Nabi Khayal, PTV News, New Delhi. [end recording]

India: Kashmir Assembly Election Date Announcement Welcomed

BK0808055696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 8 Aug 96

[Commentary by M.L. Kotru]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Election Commission has done well in announcing a poll schedule for a four-phase election to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly beginning 7 September and concluding on 30 September. Each phase is to be notified separately given the vast spread of the state, the continuing Pakistani-backed campaign of terrorism, and the consequent need to limit campaigning time. The counting of votes, which begins on 1 October, will conclude 3 October, three days after Doda, one of the most militancy-prone districts, would have gone through the poll process.

Ideally, one would have liked the elections to be held at one go, but given the security environment in the state it was inevitable that the elections to the 87-member state assembly should be held in a phased manner. The experience gained during the parliamentary elections in the state, when a similarly phased poll ensured a substantial voter turnout, underlines the prudence of the Election Commission in deciding in favor of an extended poll. It is also good that the recently amended Representation of People Act should be enforced for the first time in the country in Kashmir. The amended act should keep the number of nonserious independent candidates to the minimum since each such candidate must now have at least 10 nominations. The enhanced security deposit of 5,000 rupees per candidate should also be a deterrent.

While the Election Commission's announcement puts an end to uncertainly, which had come to surround the timing of the elections, it also provides an opportunity to all politicians in the state to establish their credentials as popular representatives. One can only hope that even those politicians who had reservations about the timing of the elections will wholeheartedly join the process. This would revive the Kashmiri hope that not all has been lost during the seven years of armed insurgency imposed on the state by armed Pakistani militants.

The Kashmiris have undergone a lot of suffering these past seven years, including wanton killings, rape, and extortions at the hands of the insurgents. The upcoming elections afford an opportunity to local politicians to restore people's faith in the rule of law and to help them partake of the economic development of which one sees visible signs in the rest of the country.

The elections pose a challenge to those whose commitment to the state being an integral part of the union has never [been] wayward not even at the height of militancy; and this is more true of the local political leadership. They will have to bear the brunt of the challenge, which Pakistan and its hired goons are going to present in the days ahead.

India: Punjab Government Intensifies Patrols at Pakistan Border

BK0908072196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Punjab government has intensified surveillance in all the areas close to the international border. The state police chief, Mr. Suday Singh, told our Chandigarh correspondent that besides increasing the number of check posts, round-the-clock patrolling has been introduced on all the roads leading to the Indo-Pak border in Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Ferozepore districts. The Jammu-Pathankot Road, which links the Kashmir Valley with the Punjab has also been brought under patrolling. He said these steps have been taken on the basis of intelligence reports which indicate that the ISI [Inter Service Intelligence of Pakistan] is planning to send Pak-trained terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir through Punjab to create trouble during the ensuing assembly elections.

India: TV Details Nation's Operational Satellite Launch Programs

BK0708071796 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 6 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The successful developmental flight of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV, has put the Indian space program on a firm footing.

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Coming close on the heels of the INSAT [Indian National Satellite] and IRS [Indian Remote Sensing Satellite] launches, the thrust now would be on launching operational satellites within the country. A report by our correspondent, Madhu Nath:

[Begin recording] On 21 March this year, Indian space research achieved a major milestone when its launch vehicle, PSLV-D3, successfully placed a 922-kg satellite into orbit. India has joined the select group of countries who have demonstrated the capability of launching satellites of a 1,000-kg category. The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle project plans three more continuation flights, with the next launch of the series scheduled for the year 1996-97 from the Sriharikota Range.

There has been a significant progress in the development of Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle, GSLV, including the upper stage cryogenic engine. Successful ground testing of the silicaphenolic (?floating sets) for use in various stages of GSLV is an important development during the year. The first developmental launch of GSLV with the capacity to place 2,500-kg satellite is expected in the year 1997-98.

Remote sensing capability got further augmented with the launching of IRS-P3, which for the first time provided data on ocean resources through a special scanner. The follow-on satellite, IRS-P4, is to be launched by the continuation flights of PSLV. The IRS-1C, successfully launched in December last year, is one of the best civilian satellites in operation in the world today. It has enhanced capabilities in terms of special resolution, wide field coverage, and the revisit capability. The next in its series, IRS-1D, similar to its predecessor, is planned for a launch in 1997-98.

The work on the follow-on satellite of the second generation ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization]-built communication satellite, INSAT-2D, is progressing steadily on the launch schedule during the year 1996-97. With this constellation of satellites providing a variety of services on an assured and enhanced basis, India shall be reaching an enviable position in the near future.

India: Space Program Said on 'Firm Footing'

BK0808123396 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 8 Aug 96 p 9

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The successful launching of two satellites this year and India's positive efforts to commercially exploit this advancement indicated that the space programme was on a firm footing and the nation will be self-reliant in this field, the annual report for 1995-96 of the Department of Space revealed.

The report said a leading US company had signed a long-term commercial contact with the Department of Space for the reception and marketing of IRS [Indian remote sensing] data worldwide. Ground stations in the US and Germany were augmented with Indian supplied equipment to receive data from Indian satellites. India was making a sustained effort to exploit their expertise in space technology.

The launches of INSAT-2C and PSLV [Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle]-D3 with IRS-P3 on board brought out the capability of the Indian space programme to realise its targets in time. The plans for future included launches of follow on satellites in the IRS and INSAT series, acquisition of commensurate launch capabilities through operationalisation of PSLV and completion of development of GSLV [Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle], the report said.

India continues to play an important role in the international fora including the UN committee on peaceful use of outer space. The inauguration of the UN Asia Pacific regional centres for space education in India last year was recognition of India's role in sharing its experience in the development and application of space technology for social benefits, the report highlighted.

INSAT was a major catalyst for the rapid expansion of television coverage in India. Satellite television now covers more than 65 percent of the Indian land mass and over 80 percent of the population. Five S-band transponders, six Chant transponders on board INSAT-2A, 2B and INSAT-1D were providing television services the report said.

The application of IRS data has proliferated into more areas.

India: Congress To Continue Support to United Front Government

BK0608135296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 6 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian National Congress has reiterated that it will continue to support the United Front government for a full term of five years. Talking to newspersons in New Delhi today, the spokesman of the Congress Parliamentary Party, Mr. Suresh Kalmadi, said the party is keen that there should be no communication gap and no misunderstanding with the government and if such a situation arises it should be taken up with the appropriate authorities immediately.

He said the party took up the telephone tapping issue with the prime minister on the basis of press reports

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and now the chapter is closed as the prime minister has denied the allegation and ordered a CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] inquiry.

India: Court Issues Notice on Alleged Charges Against Rao

BK0608095596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 6 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Delhi High Court has issued notice to the central government on the alleged use of the Indian Air Force planes by the former prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, during the last election campaign. A division bench of the High Court, headed by Justice Jaspal Singh, issued the notice on a public interest petition by the Rashtriya Mukti Morcha [RMM]. The court has directed the parties to file their replies by the 28th of October. The RMM president, Mr. Ravindra Kumar, in his petition has quoted the defense minister's statement in parliament that an amount of 25.5 crore rupees was outstanding against the former prime minister. The petitioner claimed that the Defense Ministry has failed to recover the money from the Congress president till the filing of this petition.

India: Congress Party Spokesman Denies Court Charges Against Rao

BK0808053896 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress party says that it has to pay only 5 crore 90 lakh rupees to the Defense Ministry for the use of an IAF [Indian Air Force] aircraft by the party president, Mr. Narasimha Rao, during the campaign for the recent Lok Sabha elections. The party has also said that there was no misuse of the aircraft or of public funds. Ravi Ramakrishna reports:

[Begin recording] [Ramakrishna] The Rashtriya Mukti Morcha, which filed a public interest petition in the Delhi High Court, has claimed that the former prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, has misused the IAF aircraft during the recent Lok Sabha election. The petition said that the Defense Ministry has to recover over 25 crore [rupees] from the Congress party. The Delhi High Court has issued show-cause notice yesterday to the Defense Ministry on the dues to be recovered from the former prime minister. The Congress parliamentary party spokesman, Mr. Suresh Kalmadi, however, denied that there was a misuse of the aircraft by Mr. Narasimha Rao.

[Kalmadi] There was no misuse of aircraft. The Election Commission has clearly allowed prime ministers on security reasons to use the defense aeroplanes and the outstanding with the Defense Ministry is 5 crore 90 lakh, not 25 crore that has been stated.

[Ramakrishna] Is the party going to pay this money or what exactly is happening on this front?

[Kalmadi] The party will keep up all commitments. There is no lapse from our part.

[Ramakrishna] On the issue of privatization of the Byladila mines in Madhya Pradesh for which the Delhi High Court has issued notices to the National Mineral Development Corporation and the former prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, the party said it is examining the case.

[Kalmadi] Yes. I believe there is [word indistinct] papers, but we are ... [changes thought] the Congress president has not received any notice. We don't know how he is in the picture about this and can he [words indistinct]. [end recording]

India: Seventeen Madhya Pradesh Congress Leaders Suspended

BK0608063296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 6 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Seventeen Congress leaders in Madhya Pradesh [MP] have been suspended from the party for alleged antiparty activities. The AICC [All India Congress Committee] general secretary in charge of the state, Mr. Sudhakar Rao Naik, told newspersons that these leaders have been asked to explain why they should not be expelled from the party. They are alleged to have worked against the party's candidates in the recent Lok Sabha elections. All of them happen to be the chiefs of public enterprises. The suspended party leaders include Mr. Hira Ram Verma, chairman of the Backward Class Corporation; Mr. Kanak Tiwari, chairman of the MP Housing Board; Mr. Beska Patel of MP State Tribal and Finance Corporation; and Brigadier Narina Rao, chairman of the Gwalior Development Authority.

Meanwhile, the Madhya Pradesh chief minister, Mr. Digvjay Singh, has denied the allegation that he had sacked the minister of state for animal husbandry, Mr. Akhand Pratap Singh Yadav, without permission of the Congress high command.

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Iran

Iran: Velayati Interviewed on Why Europe Opposes U.S. Sanctions

LD0808143496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 8 Aug 96

["Exclusive interview" with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by unidentified correspondent; place, date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Correspondent] Mr. Foreign Minister, it seems that today the world is actually concentrating and focusing on the question of the U.S. sanctions, I mean the recent U.S. sanction, against Iran and Libya. How do you assess the consequences? Is there any consequence behind this measure by the United States or not?

[Velayati] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. We don't believe that the American allies will follow the U.S. decision. Before the recent decision, the U.S. Administration had tried to convince its allies to come along with the United States. But they failed.

Recently the U.S. President, in spite of the objection of important countries from all over the world, signed this law putting Iran and Libya under sanction in the future by the United States. But, immediately after that, they faced a negative global reaction against this decision. Not only European countries, but Russia, Japan, China, and ASEAN countries and subcontinent countries and others have taken a very unique and firm position against this decision.

So, according to our assessment, from now we can see the signs of the failure and defeat of the recent measure taken by the United States.

[Correspondent] Mr. Foreign Minister, is it logical to you to say that the traditional allies of the United States are now rising to fight that country?

[Velayati] Of course this is not fighting against the United States. This is an objection against an irrational decision that was made by them, and that's not because of Iran only. They have objected to the U.S. decision on the basis of the principles that they believe. Just recently, GATT, as an international agreement, was signed by the countries that have joined this international organization.

What the United States has done is against the international economic laws. The United States is trying to impose its own decision and internal and domestic laws on the world. This is an extraterritorial decision, which the United States wants to make without any consultation with others, or without getting the agreement of others. So that is the reason behind of these global objections.

[Correspondent] But I believe that the Americans have tried many times to receive the agreement of others. Isn't that right?

[Velayati] Yes, yes, but they failed. In different occasions, they have tried to receive the agreement, to get the agreement of other countries, but they failed. In spite of their previous failures, they have tried to test their chance once again, but once again they have been defeated.

[Correspondent] Mr. Foreign Minister, suppose you are sitting in your office quite privately and thinking to yourself. Wouldn't you ever think this is just a political game they are playing. I mean taking into consideration that OK, there is an allocation of, if I am right, $40 million. I mean that above this amount, the European companies are not allowed to have deals with Iran or Libya. OK, don't you think this could be by any means a political game they are playing at?

[Velayati] What the United States has done is based on the domestic problems that they are facing. They are on the threshold of the presidential elections, and they are trying to justify their heavy military presence in the sensitive regions of the world, specifically in the Persian Gulf. They want to show others that Iran, as an important and strong country in the Persian Gulf, is against peace and tranquillity. So the U.S. Administration says we have to pressurize Iran to stop them to disturb the security in the region. Why?

You know that one of the most important principles of our foreign policy is regional security, which is based on regional cooperation, specifically in the Persian Gulf, which is very vital for us. The preservation of security and tranquillity in the Persian Gulf is very vital to Iran.

So that is the reason that the American allies have not been convinced that the U.S. Administration is right in the decision that they have made recently against Iran.

[Correspondent] Do you see any potential, do you foresee any potential for the Americans to probably wage a military attack on Iran?

[Velayati] You know, we have a long experience of resistance against any foreign attacks or any invasion of the country by other countries. We used to resist against the invasion of Iraq. You know that Iraq was supported by different countries, including the United States, and sometimes the United States in the past directly attacked us. They shot down our plane; that is, our civilian aircraft. So we have shown that we are

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determined to resist against any attack by any other countries. We are determined to defend ourselves, and we are determined to defend our independence.

So, I don't think that the countries that have experiences with us would dare to violate our territory and our sovereignty.

[Correspondent] I remember that a long time ago I had an interview with you, and you told me that the dual containment policy was actually dead. Now don't you think that what the Americans are doing now, what they are doing to the Iraqi Government, and what they actually trying to do against Iranians is within the framework of that dual containment policy?

[Velayati] Still, I strongly believe that as far as Iran is concerned, the dual containment is dead. The changing of the American policies day by day, going from one branch to another branch, going to one field from another field, and the very fast changing of their policies during the last two or three years is a good indication that they are disappointed with the policy made by them at the beginning of the present U.S. Administration, which is called dual containment.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much, Mr. Foreign Minister.

Iran: Velayati Says U.S. Decision Will Not Affect Policy, Economy

NC0808185996 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 8 Aug 96

[Interview with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by an unidentified MBC correspondent; date and place not given — recorded; questions are in Arabic and Velayati's answers are in English]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Correspondent] Dr. Velayati. President Clinton has signed a bill tightening the sanctions on Iran. What, in your view, is the reason for the timing of the U.S. decision and what is your assessment of it?

[Velayati] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. We believe that what is going on inside the American society on the threshold of the presidential elections the main reason behind of what they have done during last few months against Iran. So it has domestic reasons.

[Correspondent] Do you think this decision will have practical effects on you, whether in the oil, energy or political spheres?

[Velayati] You know this is not the first time that the U.S. Administration has taken such decision against Iran. Since the victory of our revolution, they have started hostile policy against us and, more or less, they tried to pressurize Iran to stop the process of the revolution. But in spite of the very clear and frank hostility of the United States, our country continued its policy. We do believe that their decision will not affect our economy and our policy.

[Correspondent] What do you expect the Arab stand on this to be?

[Velayati] We don't think that the Arab countries will support the decision which was made by the U.S. Administration, because this decision is not only against Iran but also is against Libya too as an important Arab country.

Iran: Velayati—'Our People Will Make the Aggressor Regret'

JN0808202696 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1620 GMT 8 Aug 96

[Interview with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni in Tehran; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Husayni] Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayti: How does Iran view the U.S. President's signing of the D'amato Law on tightening the embargo against Iran?

[Velayati] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Since the victory of the Islamic revolution, America has imposed various types of embargo, monitoring, and political pressures on our people. However, despite these U.S. (?massacres), we continued the march of progress and self-reliance. In fact, the signing of the embargo bill was accompanied by clamor. It is a test of the U.S. President's ability to impose his views on the world in light of recent international developments. These views have been rejected by the international community.

[Al-Husayni] In light of the accompanying threats, do you expect the confrontation between you and Washington to develop into a military blow to Iran in which Israel would participate?

[Velayati] Whatever the U.S. objectives, they are all the same to us. Our people have proved their ability to repulse foreign aggressions. Any aggressor who contemplates aggression against Iran will be taught a lesson by our people that he will never forget. We are determined to defend our territory and homeland. Our people will make the aggressor regret.

[Al-Husayni] Mr. Minister: The United States is leading an international campaign against you. It accuses you of being involved in terrorist operations all over the world,

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the latest of which the al-Khubar explosion in Saudi Arabia. What is your reaction to this campaign?

[Velayati] The U.S. accusations are absolute lies. We rejected the Dhahran and the TWA plane explosions and what happened in Atlanta. We did not support any of them. The Americans are repeating their flimsy, baseless allegations. They try to push internal problems outside American borders on the eve of the presidential elections. They try to spread differences among the Islamic countries so that they can achieve their objectives in a better way.

[Al-Husayni] What is your assessment, your excellency the minister, of the European reaction to Washington, particularly the French position?

[Velayati] We consider the reaction of Europe and the other independent states against the U.S. decision, which exceeded the limits, a sound positive step. If countries had remained silent, without giving any reaction, the meaning and significance of political independence and national sovereignty would be lost. America believes that the laws passed by its parliament [as heard] will be implemented throughout the world. In other words, America believes that it is the center of world government, something that independent countries reject.

[Al-Husayni] What do you think the Arab position will be? Do you think that the Arabs will concur with Washington's position, or will they show solidarity with you?

[Velayati] Iran looks forward to friendship with the Arab world. It will never consider the Arabs to be on the American and Israeli side; that is, it will never find them on the opposite front. The Arab countries constitute the biggest part of the Islamic world. We believe that it is necessary to cooperate to face the enemies of Islam. We do not harbor enmity toward the Arab world. Rather, we seek amity and friendship. The best way is to build a bridge of friendship, and not enmity, with Iran.

[Al-Husayni] Our last question Dr. Velayati is: How are your current relations with the Arabs, particularly with Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which recently stepped up their criticism of the U.S. positions?

[Velayati] Relations and cooperation among the countries of the region should be established on the basis of removing mutual apprehension. Bridges of confidence should be built among these countries. We have always been ready to cooperate with the regional Arab states on the basis of mutual confidence. Reinforcing trust in collective cooperation among us will help achieve stability and security in the region. Our relations with Saudi Arabia have overcome the fluctuations that prevailed in the past. These relations could advance through mutual desire.

As for Egypt, its stance regarding Israel, as well as its support for the Syrian and Lebanese stands in the conflict against Israel, are important to us. Egypt's attempt to come closer to the Syrian stands and the interests of the Arab and Islamic world, as well as its efforts to distance itself from Israel, could help in bringing Egypt closer to Iran. This will be in the interest of the Iranian and Egyptian peoples and the Middle East.

Iran: Velayati on U.S. 'Baseless' Allegations

LD0908144496 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 8 Aug 96

[Studio interview with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by unidentified correspondent, on 8 August, in the "Political Roundtable" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Passage omitted] [Correspondent] We still see that various accusations are made against Iran, even regarding the TWA airliner and the incident which occurred in the [Olympic] games park in Atlanta — which, of course, was a domestic American issue. How do you assess these issues as a whole?

[Velayati] As I said, an important part of such problems which specifically occur in America is related to internal U.S. problems. In the past, some circles in America were keen to attribute such problems and disruption within the American community to outside factors. That is a known ploy for those states which are incapable of overcoming their problems, no matter where those problems may be. They try to create an outside enemy — even an imaginary one —and an effective foreign factor in the domestic problems of their community. That is not an unknown occurrence. If the Americans don't attribute this to outside [their country] — every time to another country, another place and another source — then they will be forced to answer to their own people. That is the American government will be forced to answer to its people. These days the American people are aware of that country's government's creating proper security in America. Even the U.S. President has admitted that some of the social problems which have occurred, particularly among the youth of America, for various reasons, are problems which the government is powerless to resolve. He has sought help from various places in order to overcome the internal problems. That is why we believe that, according to what we have gleaned through the years, by our experiences through the years, such problems relate to U.S. social situation.

[Correspondent] Another point in Clinton's speech was the issue of Iran and Libya obtaining the so-called

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weapons of mass-destruction. What is [his] reason for raising this issue when a few days ago we had the anniversary of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima by America?

[Velayati] The Americans, that is the U.S. Government, wish to monopolize power in the world. Therefore, whatever they do in developing their own warfare facilities is legitimate. If anyone else does the same thing then there is no justification for it. That is why they believe themselves to be the guardian of the world and they do not hide that either. Nowadays there is a growing resistance in all states, even those which are America's allies, which speaks of the rejection of this American demand. The nations of the world are no longer prepared to tolerate this so-called superpower which has claims of sovereignty over the whole world.

As far as Iran is concerned, the percentage of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran's budget allocated for defense matters is almost less than that of all the Persian Gulf regional states. I mean, this is an existing reality. This percentage of the budget which has been allocated to defense matters is quite rational and defensible. [passage omitted]

The type of allegations made against Iran is baseless. They say that Iran is trying to produce nuclear arms. We signed the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty years ago and recently we signed it again. We have shown our commitment to international law. The head of the International Atomic Agency has on many occasions visited Iran to inspect our nuclear centers and has explicitly declared that the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to international laws and utilized nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Therefore the falsehood of the U.S. allegations concerning weapons of mass destruction and Iran is seen.

[Correspondent] You pointed out that European and industrialized countries were opposed to the United States from the very beginning. Why?

[Velayati] Support for Iran is not the only reason for their opposition. Of course, they all want closer relations with Iran and they are unhappy if the United States wants to damage their interests here. But it seems that the main reason for the opposition is a matter of principle. The Americans want to pass laws by their legislature and their president, which is a matter for domestic affairs, but give these laws an international dimension and impose them on the world. Everyone is opposed to this as a matter of principle because it violates the independence of other countries.

[Correspondent] The European Union has even threatened to retaliate against the recent U.S. sanctions.

[Velayati] Yes, indeed, and it is not limited to our case. The Europeans have even threatened to retaliate over the Cuban case.

[Correspondent] The Helms-Burton law on Cuba?

[Velayati] Yes. All countries that have a major role in the world economy or politics, including the countries of Europe and the Far East, Russia, China, and others, find it unacceptable that, contrary to international laws on trade, including GATT, ratified recently by its member countries, the United States should seek to impose its irrational demands on the world economy and international politics. We predict that these countries will definitely react and that the Americans will be the ones forced to withdraw from their irrational position.

[Correspondent] You spoke about Moscow and the Russian government. Do you have anything to say about the Russian government's stance regarding this issue?

[Velayati] The Russian government's stance is like that of Europe, China, and the ASEAN states. The Russians have a record of taking an independent stance and defending their international interests. [Russia] is a powerful country. Besides having close relations with Iran and refusing to yield to any imposition by America concerning Iran, it believes the U.S. move to be a hegemonist act on the international scene which is unacceptable. The Russians will certainly not accede to this imposition.

[Correspondent] Let us conclude. The Americans knew that Europe and the industrialized world were against them. They knew about the Russian stance. It was obvious that the plan would fail. Nevertheless, Mr. Clinton agreed to sign the bill. Why?

[Velayati] This is not the first time that the current U.S. government has acted without judgment or proper evaluation. You might remember when they wanted to discourage the Russians from helping us with the Bushehr nuclear reactor. The U.S. President started by saying in his propaganda that he would go to Russia and persuade the Russians. But he went to Russia and failed to convince them. This was immaturity in policy-making and propaganda. How could they manage to speak with such confidence without proper prior assessment, to address world public opinion, to speak of victory, to give hope to friends, to warn the enemy, but then go to Moscow and fail after four hours of talks with President Yeltsin on the need to end their nuclear cooperation with Iran? And then, they announced very openly that they had failed. How could they manage to speak of victory, and to extend people's expectations but then go [to Moscow] and fail? The negative consequences of such defeats are greater. They had advertised to the

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contrary without caution or politeness. The same thing is happening again. They tried hard, in Sharm al-Shaykh, in Lyon, in Paris, in Italy, and other places. They tried to impose their views about Iran on Europe, Japan, Canada, and others. They failed. This time they started a propaganda racket a few days before the signing of the bill by Mr. Clinton, maybe because they wanted to frighten the competition and push forward their own plans in the climate that they had created. But events proved that they had failed in their calculations once again.

[Correspondent] Do you think that this law will affect the Islamic Republic of Iran?

[Velayati] During the not very easy years after the revolution, the imposed war [with Iraq] and the economic sanctions, our people demonstrated their ability to support and guard their national interest. We will not be moved by such threats. We have no difficulty with the production or sale of oil. We have no problem with the management of the country's economy. Of course, this does not mean that if a powerful country is making decisions against Iran, we will not face difficulties in pursuing our political and economic goals. But we will continue with our work, It is obvious that there is a need for courage against such pressures, even though they might be irrational. Our people and government have passed their test, and through their Islamic and national will, they will ride over this wave, which is no smaller than the other ones. The initial signs are already evident.

Iran: Jannati Says America 'Absolutely Insane'

LD0908124796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0820 GMT 9 August 96

[Second Friday sermon by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, secretary of the Guardian Council, at Tehran University on 9 August — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

Looking around us, it seems that America has gone absolutely insane, and this state of mind has been brought about by the Zionists. This is to say that Clinton is at last coming to the end of his term and is facing an imminent election. He wants votes, and the only people who can arrange these votes for him are the Zionists.

I do not think that throughout the history of America there has been a president who has surrendered himself to the Zionists so blindly and unconditionally. To please the Zionists, he has even gone a few steps further than absolute surrender.

For instance, one of these steps is the pressure that has been put on the Bosnian Government and political dignitaries to sever their relations with us. But we are glad that the people of Bosnia have proven their gratefulness. In other words, they have expressed their loyalty in very clear terms. Some of the Bosnian officials have asked: Where was everyone else when they [the Iranians] helped and saved us in the course of the war? Now that we have pushed our enemy back and have managed to liberate our country and regain most of our lands, you tell us that Iran can no longer have any influence here, and there should be no more visits and exchanges.

The Bosnian Government and nation are well aware of the extent of Iran's assistance, however, pressure by the enemies continue unabated. [Crowd chants: Death to America!]

Following on, we have the issue of the intensification of sanctions decided by Clinton. This has taken place according to the same criterion. He has graciously signed a bill aimed at intensifying sanctions against Iran. This was such a disgraceful move that it caused the opposition of the whole world, both East and the West, and both the allies and the non-allies of America.

Everyone has objected, asking: What is it that you are after? Why are you violating international laws? Is international trade not free? Are countries not allowed to have free economies and decide for themselves about their own economic and commercial issues? Why do you violate international laws? And why do you want to impose your own domestic laws and conventions on the entire world?

I believe that Turkey's clear response exactly reflects the views of all of us. The officials of that country say Turkey is not one of the states of America. In other words, you are only allowed to implement your internal bills and laws within the boundaries of your own country. Outside these boundaries, the countries of the world are all independent. You cannot exert pressure on others, as they are not part of the United States; pressures such as telling others to refrain from signing contracts and having exchanges and trade deals.

The move to intensify sanctions has spawned worldwide protest. The bill was in fact a document of disgrace for America that was signed by Clinton. This will be recorded in history. The present and future generations will remember this. There can be no justification in the international community and the world political forums for this move.

Despite all these things, they have still gone ahead and made this decision, however, we are certainly made of

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sturdier stock than that. They can exert as much pressure as they want, but at the end of the day, they and their allies will come to more harm than we do.

Other countries will also be harmed. We do not deny that we will come under pressure, but we are not supposed to give in to pressures.

At present, America is constantly boosting its military presence in the Persian Gulf, and every now and then, it decides to put its forces on military alert or engage in other similar theatrical acts.

Oil — that is to say the oil income and what they call the American oil interests in the region — together with the prerogative of imposing Israel on the region are important priorities for America. But we are never going to succumb.

In his meeting with our diplomats, the eminent leader of the revolution — may his shadow extend — put the issue in succinct terms. He said we had to be sharper than a sword. He said we had to be harder than steel, and at the same time, gentler than silk. [passage omitted] [crowd chants traditional Shiite chant in Arabic meaning: Never give in to abjectness!]

Additionally, we have the issue of the intensification of sanctions decided by Clinton. This has taken place according to the same criterion. He has graciously signed a bill aimed at intensifying sanctions against Iran. This was such a disgraceful move that it caused the opposition of the whole world, both East and the West, and both the allies and the non-allies of America.

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[Crowd chants traditional Shiite chant in Arabic meaning: Never give in to abjectness]

We will not submit to bullying, and this is a fact. It seems as if the U.S. Government has not understood this fact after 10 years of testing us. The 10-year experience has not made the United States reach the conclusion that this people, this nation, this leader and this society will not surrender to pressure and will not raise its hands in surrender. The U.S. Government, which intends to rule the world as a master, has not yet understood this simplest of issues.

U.S. politicians face many domestic problems. They are trying to find a cover-up for their internal problems. A person presented a report to us on the internal situation in the United States. Of course, his report is worth investigating. However, the said person has been working in America for a number of years and knows influential people. He was saying that hundreds of organizations exist in America that oppose the Zionist policies. And these organizations are daily growing under various names. They are finding more solidarity and are expressing their opposition. But the propaganda mouthpieces of the Zionists do not allow these organizations to publicize themselves all over the world. Such publicity would make clear the extent of opposition to these policies. After hearing this gentleman's report I came to the conclusion that these

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organizations are responsible for the explosions we hear about in the news. I should imagine the same anti-Zionist organizations, which oppose the government of Clinton and his clique, are responsible for the explosion in Atlanta, the explosion in that plane and similar incidents in Oklahoma and other places. They plant and detonate bombs to demonstrate their existence, but America's propaganda apparatus, in order to silence the voice of its internal opponents and in order to score a point against us, immediately blames us or some other states.

By blaming us, the U.S. Government firstly hides the fact that it is facing so much opposition inside the country, which is prepared to resort to such measures; and secondly, it scores a point against us and creates the sort of hue and cry that we are witnessing. It scores a point by accusing us to be terrorists and as supporters of terrorism.

It intends to mobilize the entire people of the world against us, but praise be to God, the world is gradually realizing that all their allegations of terrorism were aimed at intensifying the sanctions against us. They wanted the world people and other governments to turn against us and serve the U.S. interests by treating us in a hostile manner. They wanted to turn others against us, but their efforts are now backfiring.

May God continue supporting us, the same as before. God willing we will be protected, provided we do not abandon our revolutionary stances as the esteemed leader has said. [passage omitted]

Iran: Clinton's Sanctions Bill Unites Allies, Opponents

LD0908105796 Tehran IRNA in English 1551 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, Aug. 8, IRNA — In signing the 'Iran and Libya Sanctions Act,' President Clinton called for a united stand against the two countries, but the only response achieved is in uniting U.S. allies and opponents against the measures.

Instead of gaining favor, the act has succeeded in antagonising even governments normally supportive of U.S. po[illegible] as well as producing unusually outspoken criticism from such countries as China and Russia.

With the European Union being the most vociferous in threatening retaliation, some oil analysts have gone as far as suggesting that the attempt to punish foreign firms trading with Iran and Libya could be a watershed in transatlantic relations.

The extent of the worldwide criticism prompted the FINANCIAL TIMES newspaper here to warn that there was a "serious risk of diplomatic wires getting crossed to nobody's benefit."

While supporting European governments as being right in objecting and preparing robust retaliation, it said that the U.S. and its allies must work harder to understand each other's position.

The daily saw the core dispute being that U.S. assertions about supposed terrorism was unproven. Washington, it said, had "yet to demonstrate that either Tehran or Tripoli is at present engaged in a campaign of state terror against other countries."

American officials have been balking at disclosing whether it has any supposed secret evidence, but the FINANCIAL TIMES said that the U.S. needed to back its case against so-called 'rogue states.'

The U.S., it said, had "more to gain from working with its allies against the terrorist threat than from punishing them with unacceptable legislation."

Iran: Daily on 'Fallacious,' 'Hollow' U.S. Allegations

NC0908142096 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 5 Aug 96 pp 1, 11

[Political commentary: "BBC's Confusion and the U.S. Newspapers' Claims"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its 2 August edition, USA TODAY claims that according to documentary evidence that the CIA has placed at its disposal, the American authorities are confident that the bomb that exploded in Saudi Arabia (Dhahran) was planted by terrorists who had been trained at a terrorism training center inside Iran.

On Saturday night [3 August], while citing the above newspaper report, BBC radio added that the U.S. Government is certain that the members of two Islamic groups in Saudi Arabia, Hizballah of the Hejaz [ancient name for Saudi Arabia] and the Islamic Revolution, have been trained in Tehran at the Imam 'Ali base.

To support its allegations, the BBC carried an interview with Dr. Hushang Amir Ahmadi, a professor at Rutgers University in the United States. It is interesting to note that the professor — despite the wishes of the BBC directors — openly admitted that the U.S. accusations that Iran supports terrorism are due to pressure from American public opinion on the Clinton administration following the explosion at the American military base in Dhahran and the explosions that occurred aboard the TWA plane and in Atlanta.

He also did not deny that there is a relationship between these allegations, the coming U.S. presidential elections,

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and the Senate's approval of tighter sanctions. He said: If the U.S. Government has evidence it can provide USA TODAY and it is public and common knowledge now, why has this evidence not been placed at the disposal of the THE NEW YORK TIMES and WASHINGTON POST, as well as British and French newspapers? Such claims require solid and immutable evidence. The fact is that such evidence does not exist; even in the article in USA TODAY there are many ifs and buts.

Amir Ahmadi added: Messrs Christopher and Perry have always made such remarks. When a bomb exploded in Argentina, Christopher immediately said: We know this has been done by Iran. Later on it transpired that he knew nothing. Ahmadi elaborated that there is no evidence of Iranian involvement in the Dhahran explosion in Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, just a few days after the above mentioned explosion, Clinton openly admitted that there is no evidence of Iran's involvement in that explosion. It is worth mentioning that following consecutive U.S. failures to convince its European allies to minimize their relations with Iran, especially following Iran's dazzling victory in the athletics, science, economics, and commercial fields on the international level, the mass media affiliated to news imperialism embarked on extensive propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

However, due to the totally fallacious and hollow nature of their propagandist clamor, even they have indirectly admitted the baseless nature of this propaganda in interviews and reports. One obvious example is the aforementioned interview broadcast by the BBC. It is worth mentioning that William Perry, the U.S. Secretary of Defense retracted his allegations of a few days ago regarding Iranian involvement in the Dhahran explosion. This is another example of the confusion in the U.S. foreign policy apparatus.

Iran Ready For International Cooperation Against Terrorism

LD0908153796 Tehran IRAN in Persian 6 Aug 96 p 2

[Commentary by Hamideh Fahimi: "A Few Points About This Incident"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The story: during his recent visit to [Saudi] Arabia, the American secretary of defense claimed that Iran was probably responsible for the Dhahran bomb explosion. After his return to America, he took back what he had said and told correspondents that in fact he had never made any accusations against Iran.

The first point: The American secretary of defense made the allegations against Islamic Iran after the fire of terrorism had spread to the American territory. For American statesmen, the Dhahran explosion, the crash of a passenger plane, and then the Atlanta bomb blast were all heavy blows which could impede Clinton's re-election to the White House. In particular, the Atlanta incident was a heavy blow since it proved that the main suspects for the blast as well as other similar incidents were in fact elements inside America itself.

For this reason, once again the Americans began to search in other countries, in particular in the Islamic world, for a solution to their problems. They then accused Islamic Iran without providing any document or evidence.

The second point: Although the American secretary of defense took back his allegations on the possiblility of Iranian involvement in the Dhahran bombing, some Kuwaiti newspapers found a new opportunity to start a wave of anti-Iranian propaganda.

Without paying any attention to the huge presence of an aggressive American military contingent in the Persian Gulf, the Kuwaiti newspapers AL-SIYASAH and AL-QABAS introduced Iran as the factor responsible for tension and crisis in the region. [passage omitted]

It would be appropriate if AL-SIYASAH and AL-QABAS would try to grasp the sensitive conditions in the region and avoid adding grist to the enemy's mill by joining the wave of propaganda waged by America and the Zionists. Without a doubt, the people of the region will never forget the contribution of "the defenders of the aggressors" to tension and insecurity in the region.

The third point: following the bomb explosion in Argentina, the Zionist regime, clearly supported by America, claimed that Iran was involved in the incident and this gave rise to an extensive propaganda campaign. However, months later, Argentine officials formally announced that the explosion had nothing to do with Iran. The Oklahoma bombing was another case which proved the baselessness of the American allegations against Iran.

Any proper investigation and inquiry into the allegations against Iran — if carried without any particular political bias or motivation — will doubtless prove that Iran is innocent of any charge of involvement in acts of terrorism.

The final point: Islamic Iran itself is one of the main victims of terrorism. Moreover, Iran has repeatedly called for a serious confrontation with terrorist elements the world over. Without a doubt, supporting and harboring terrorists will lead to nothing but an increase in the acts

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of terrorism. International cooperation is absolutely essential within the framework of campaigns against terrorism, and the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to offer its full cooperation in this field.

Iran: Commentary Views Relativity of Term 'Terrorist'

NC0908150996 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 1 Aug 96 pp 1, 4

[Political commentary: "Who is the Terrorist?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "Terror", "terrorism", "terrorist", "violence", "abduction", "genocide", (massacre) are terms that are being bandied in Western political and press circles more than usual these days.

Everyone denounces terrorism, but no one asks who the "terrorist" is and instead they all join in the chorus of "Stop thief!" Nowadays, those people who are raising anti-terrorist cries and shouting themselves hoarse in their denunciation of "terrorism" are themselves the agents, supporters, and sponsors of the worst kind of terrorist acts in the world.

The Qana debacle in Lebanon has not been forgotten and the lethal silence of Western circles, the United States, and European countries in the face of the Serbs' atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina will never be obliterated from our memories. The merciless massacres and murders in Sabra and Shatila, in the Palestinian refugee camps, and of Palestinian combatant youths have been firmly and deeply registered in history.

The savage bombing and missile attacks in southern Lebanon by the Zionist regime will never be forgotten. The coups d'etat of the militarists in Algeria, the repression of the Islamists in Egypt and Tunisia, abductions by Mosad and CIA agents, the downing of an Iranian passenger plane, and the official approval of the abduction bill in the United States are some of the irrefutable facts that would be very difficult to forget.

The most terroristic government in the world is treated with love and affection by Western leaders and the murderers of the Palestinian nation are awarded medals. Those responsible for the explosion in the holy shrine of 'Ali Ibn-e Musa Reza (peace be upon him) have sought shelter in the embrace of the West and the Western parliaments and governments send official invitations to the Monafeqin [hypocrites — pejorative term for the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] terrorists. In the cradle of terrorism, even athletes are not safe and Atlanta has become a venue for the power play of terrorists. Therefore, first and foremost, terrorism should be eradicated from its birthplace.

Who has awarded the right to certain countries to interpret the term "terrorism" according to their own interests and inclinations, and to accuse all those who refuse to grovel before them of being terrorists? Is the defense of the oppressed and Muslims for their lawful rights 'terrorism' or is it the extensive crimes and massacres of the Zionist regime?

In Britain, terrorists are awarded a radio network; in France and Germany, terrorists are given financial and legal support. But at the same time, these countries are afflicted with domestic terrorism. The neo-Nazis and Fascists of Germany and Sweden, the Mafia in Italy, and pressure from all the other terrorist groups in other European countries are examples of the above. World public opinion can be a better judge of "who is the terrorist."

Iran: ABRAR Describes 'Vulnerable' Situation in Pakistan

NC0808120496 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 29 Jul 96 p 12

[Commentary by M. Mollazehi: "The Antiregime Coalition in Pakistan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Political parties and groups opposed to the Pakistani Government convened an important gathering in Islamabad and agreed on the need to step up their political pressure in order to oust the Benazir Bhutto government and to stage early elections. The leadership of the opposition has been assumed by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Apart from the other groups convergent with the Muslim League, such as the Jamaat-e Islami, the Jamiat-e Ulema-e Islam, and the Ahl-e Hadis, the presence of two other groups such as the Mohajir Qaumi Movement [MQM] and the Tehrik-e Nefaz-e Fiqh-e Ja'faria [TNFJ] at the Islamabad session of the opponents of the Pakistan People's Party [PPP] regime is of special significance.

The MQM, which is considered responsible for the unrest in the cities of Hyderabad and Karachi in Sindh province [as published], has major problems with the government. However, the question is how has Nawaz Sharif been able to coordinate his stances with the TNFJ. Besides, the participation of the TNFJ —which had earlier concurred with the Pakistan PPP at a session presided over by the Muslim League — seems quite unnatural and indicates the intensification of the activities by the opponents of Benazir Bhutto to topple her government.

Ostensibly the strong reaction by commercial and industrial magnates against the government's new tax bill has

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inspired optimism among the opponents of the government. If their activities are coordinated and escalated, they will be able to compel the government to step down. The experience of Khaleda Zia in Bangladesh and the way she was toppled from power by the intensification of demonstrations and strikes seems to have gained Nawaz Sharif's attention. There are certain doubts that the conditions in Pakistan will be such that the Bangladesh experience can be repeated.

In any case, whenever the consensus among 14 political parties to intensify their activities against the PPP government takes the form of street demonstrations and proliferation of strikes, Benazir Bhutto's government will face difficulties in continuing to function for the next two years. Even though the government has the necessary means for controlling the situation at its disposal and the necessary political determination for retaining power, in view of the PPP's relatively extensive popular base it appears that the opposition has been inflicted with a sort of overoptimism regarding its attainment of power.

In any case, the important reality is that opposition groups in Islamabad have concurred on ousting the government and the establishment of a neutral government and early elections. However, there are still differences on other issues and therefore the maintaining of the current stances proclaimed in Islamabad may not be such an easy task.

The crux of the matter is that an upsurge in the opposition to the PPP government at a time when the country is grappling with law and order problems — especially in Sindh province — and when differences on the latest tax bill have resulted in drawing people toward the opposition ranks could exacerbate the country's political atmosphere. However, it is debatable whether there is such a level of unrest that it could force the government to relinquish power.

Of course, the stance of the Armed Forces — as the most organized institution of power in Pakistan — will be decisive in any kind of conflict. However, so far there has been no indication that the Armed Forces will support the opponents of the government even though Nawaz Sharif may be banking on changes in the Armed Forces' perspective on regaining power.

Nevertheless, Pakistan is experiencing very vulnerable conditions with regard to retaining factional power. Also the traditional forces that reflect the interests of the industrial magnates and the merchant bourgeoisie have displayed a reaction — to the benefit of society's lower economic groups — to the plans aimed at changing the current situation. However, it seems difficult to accept that it will be possible to make the government relinquish power by the means announced at the Islamabad session.

Iran: Azeri Official Arranges Foreign Minister's 'Imminent' Visit

LD0808203896 Tehran IRNA in English 1522 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug 7 (IRNA) — Visiting Director General of the Political Department at Azeri Foreign Ministry Wahdet Sultanzadah and Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs Mahmud Va'ezi exchanged views on issues of mutual interest in a meeting here Thursday [8 August]. The two sides reviewed the historical and present ties between Tehran and Baku and considered as "ineffective" the enemy activities for marring mutual friendship. Sultanzadah, who has travelled to Iran for arrangement of the imminent visit to Tehran of Azeri Foreign Minister Hasan A. Hasanov, said that Tehran-Baku ties had improved over recent months thanks to the exchange of numerous visits by the Iranian and Azeri high-ranking officials. He said that exchange of visits by the two countries' officials was the sign of friendship, making enemies unable to find even a negative point in Iran-Azerbaijan ties. He added that Hasanov is to visit Iran to declare deep friendship between Iran and Azerbaijan and that the visit would be significant because Hasanov is expected to hold talks with the Iranian officials on issues relevant to Tehran-Baku bilateral, regional and international ties and to exchange views on the legal regime of the Caspian Sea. Va'ezi welcomed the visit to Iran of Hasanov and said that it would render a suitable opportunity to the two sides to hold talks on issues of mutual interest, especially on the Caspian Sea. He added that a session is to be held at the level of deputy foreign ministers and foreign ministers of the Caspian Sea littoral states in order to handle the Caspian Sea relevant issues.

Iran: Rafsanjani Meets Head of British Muslim Parliament

LD0808182796 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The new head of the Muslim Parliament of [Great] Britain was received today by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

During this meeting, the head of the Muslim Parliament, Ghayasuddin Siddiqi describing the status of Islam and Muslims in Europe, stressed the respect and self-belief that Muslims living in Europe enjoy as a result of the leadership of His Holiness the Imam [Khomeyni], may God Almighty be satisfied with him, and the victory

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of Islam in Iran. He added: European Muslims, in the light of the Islamic revolution [in Iran] now take pride in being Muslims and persist in carrying our their religious rites.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani, praising the late Kalim Siddiqi, the Muslim thinker and campaigner, for his endeavours, stressed the need for the realization of the rights of Muslims in Europe. He expressed the hope that Muslims in Europe could freely defend their Islamic beliefs and make efforts to introduce Islam's various dimensions.

Iran: Trade Minister, Tatar Delegation Discuss Relations

LD0808151196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1430 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The methods of expanding cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Tatarstan were discussed in a meeting today between our country's commerce minister and a senior Tatar delegation in Tehran.

At the end of the meeting, Commerce Minister Yahya ol-Eshaq said: The Tatar republic has capabilities in the aircraft, oil, and chemical industries and is a suitable market for Iranian goods. According to the commerce minister, building materials, foodstuffs, clothing, and household goods are some of the products Iran will be able to export to the Tatar Republic.

Iran: Orumiyeh Clerics Stress Sectarian Unity

NC0908072396 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 29 Jul 96 p 8

[By the ETTELA'AT correspondent in Orumiyeh]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sunni and Shiite clerics of the Orumiyeh region stressed the need for consolidating the bases of unity in the region.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Gholamreza Hasani, the representative of the Vali-ye Faqih [supreme jurisconsult] who is also the Orumiyeh Friday imam, first conveyed his greetings on the auspicious occasion of the joyous anniversary of the birth of the deliverer of mankind, the last of the prophets (may peace be upon him and his scion) and stressed the importance of unity and solidarity in the face of the satanic plots of the enemies.

He added: The path for the salvation of the Islamic community lies in the unity of the Word and we believe that with Islamic unity one can cut off the criminal hands and foil the traitorous objectives of our enemies.

Citing the holy Koranic verses pertaining to the unity of Muslims, he expressed the hope that under the guidance of the great leader of the Islamic Revolution, his eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, Muslims will be able to safeguard the hallowed aspirations of Islam under the aegis of such solidarity.

The Orumiyeh Friday imam stated: Awareness of the plots by the powers of world arrogance is one of the basic ways to attain the unity of the Islamic world.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed Mohammad Fakhri, the head of the Islamic Propagation Organization [IPO] in West Azerbaijan, commenting on the same subject stated: The program enunciated in Islam — including attendance at Friday and congregational prayer gatherings, performance of the hajj, and so on — is in itself a factor for unification of the Muslims.

He said: Islam accepts the presence of nationalities and ethnic groups to a reasonable and natural level, and tribes and clans have formed the basis of creation. However, the criterion and hallmark of a human being is divine piety.

Referring to the importance of the role of the clergy in consolidating the bases of unity, he said: In the first phase the clergy and our Sunni and Shiite brothers should pay greater attention to the basic tenets rather than peripheral details so that there is no reason for discord.

One of the Orumiyeh clerics, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mehdi Sharifi stated: We have many common elements with the Sunnis. In order to forge greater unity between the Shiites and Sunnis, greater importance should be given to the common denominators and one should refrain from mentioning points that create discord.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Ebrahim Hashemi, an instructor at the Orumiyeh teachers' training college, mentioned the need for strengthening the foundations of Muslim unity and said: The five schools of thought, namely, Ja'fari, Maleki, Hanbali, Hanafi, and Shafe'i, are similar to five fingers of the same hand. We should refrain from mentioning any issue that would incite differences so that the enemies of Islam do not have any pretexts.

Molla 'Abdallah Mozaffari, the secretary of the Sunni clerical council of Orumiyeh, referred to the importance of unity and solidarity among Muslims in general, and between Sunnis and Shiites in particular, in order to combat the various plots of the enemies of Islam. He stressed: Today, with the blessings of the grand Islamic Revolution and the leadership of his eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i and the unified presence of the people on the scene, the Islamic system is endowed with consummate

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strength and the oppressed of the world have their eyes focused on this divine system.

Alluding to the recent moves by Turkey in West Azerbaijan, Molla Mozaffari said: We are aware that the United States and Israel are behind these moves and they are plotting against the Islamic Republic of Iran. They should know that the Muslim people of Iran, who have displayed exemplary patience, fortitude, and steadfastness as they displayed during the eight years of holy defense [Iran-Iraq war], are just as prepared today to shed their last drop of blood — hand in hand with one another — to protect the lofty values of Islam and the hallowed soil of their country.

The Friday imam of Balu village in Orumiyeh, Molla Esma'il Khavand, described Unity Week as one of the most important gains in the history of the Islamic Revolution and added: In order to make this important gain more productive, we should avoid mentioning minor differences and should respect one another's sanctities.

He continued: We should certainly foster Islamic unity in order to elicit the pleasure of God Almighty and the Holy Prophet [Muhammad] (peace be upon him and his scion), which will boost greater concord and solidarity among the people.

Seyyed 'Osman Hoseyni, Friday imam of the village of Qale' Esma'il Aqa in Orumiyeh, commented on the significance of Unity Week and said: In the course of the history of Islam, there has not been much mention of Muslim unity. Therefore, Unity Week, which is one of the most valuable achievements of his eminence the Imam (may God be pleased with him), should be considered a guideline in Islamic history.

While stressing the fact that the bountiful shade of the strong tree of unity should encompass all facets and stages of the lives of Muslims, he said: At this sensitive juncture in the life of the Islamic Revolution, the unity of Muslims is a thorn in the side of the enemies of the revolution and Islam.

Molla Khodayyer 'Abdollahian, instructor at the Sheykh Shaltut seminary in Orumiyeh, referred to the bounties and benefits of unity among Muslims and added: Today, the oppressed of the world are thirsting for Islamic justice more than ever before. Thus, the Islamic Republic of Iran's officials should take advantage of this opportunity and send propagators to other countries and convey the meaning and spirituality of Islam to the people of the world.

The Friday Imam of the Silvana district in Orumiyeh also spoke and said: When we are able to be united and to view one another's sanctities with respect and to keep the magnificent term 'unity' always in mind in whatever we do, only then can we become an invincible bastion before the world's infidels and ward off the cultural onslaught by the enemies of the world.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin 'Ali Baqeri, who is in charge of the Great Islamic Center in Orumiyeh, referred to the importance of the strengthening of the bases of unity among Muslims and said: Today, our unity is far greater than in the past, and to carry this great task to its final destination requires more unity and solidarity than ever before.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Baqeri then spoke of the program formulated by the Great Islamic Center for the celebration of Unity Week in Orumiyeh district and stated: A variety of programs will be presented in the rural districts of Orumiyeh by the Islamic Center.

He added: The Sunni clerics of Orumiyeh district will also participate in the seventh Islamic Unity conference in Sanandaj, West Iran.

Iran: Nationwide Survey of Mines, Production

96LA0271A Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian
21 May 96 p 5

[FBIS Translated Text] After profound and extensive expert study and choosing the best scientific and technical procedures, mines must be cut to pieces with the smallest losses and exploited.

With the discovery of each mine, fresh blood flows through the veins of the nation's economy, creating another useful area for increasing employment and making exports flourish. According to the experts, just the mines already discovered in our country are so important that if they were used fully and in the desired way, they could serve as a suitable replacement for oil revenues and for daily increasing economic and social growth and prosperity.

What you will find here is a report on the extent of our nation's mining reserves and how they are being used, which was prepared for the occasion of Mining Day (1 Khordad [May 22]) and which shows our abilities and resources in this thriving sector of our economy.

Extent of Employment in Mining and Metals Sector

The Ministry of Mines and Metals is one of the nation's largest and most active ministries. More than 100,000 people work in this ministry or in its affiliated organizations and companies, and more than 2,400 mines also operate under its supervision.

Already more than 130 factories and large industrial and mining complexes are active in connection with

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the Ministry of Mines and Metals. The value of this ministry's production has been estimated at more than $4.5 billion.

Likewise, the value of the products produced in various sectors of the Ministry of Mines and Metals during the First Five-Year Plan was more than $11 billion, and in view of the investments made during the First Five-Year Plan, it is expected that the value of its production during the Second Five-Year Plan will be more than $20 billion.

Classification of Nation's Mines

According to the primary provisions of the Mines Law enacted in 1362 [21 March 1983 - 20 March 1984], in general the nation's mines are divided into the following four groups:

First group: rock iron, rock chalk, sand and gravel, table salt, construction stones, and the like.

Second group: metals, including iron, gold, silver, chrome, tin, mercury, lead, zinc, and copper; nitrates, phosphates, alkaline salts, sulfates, borites, mica, granite, bentonite, bauxite, industrial clay, decorative stones, and the like; precious stones such as diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and turquoise; various types of rock coal; and mineral waters from which mining materials can be obtained.

Third group: oil, natural gas, natural tar, natural asphalt rock, and oil schist.

Fourth group: radioactive materials.

In the past, only government institutions were authorized to be active in the second, third, and fourth mining groups. Under the Mines law enacted in Mordad 1364 [23 July - 22 August 1985], mines were divided into the two groups "large" and "small." This opened the way for private companies to be active with the mines in the second group.

The Ministry of Mines and Metals supervises all mining activities in all areas with the exception of the mines in the third group, which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Oil. It can also take on extraction and exploration activities at mines that are recognized as important because they are "large mines."

Rock Iron and Concentrated Copper Production

In the mining sector, the production of rock iron in the years 1368 -1372 [21 March 1989 - 20 March 1994] grew an average of 36.1 percent per year, which is more than the amount projected in the First Five-Year Development Plan (24.2 percent).

During this period the extraction of rock iron increased from 1.87 million tons in 1367 [21 March 1988 - 20 March 1989] to 8 million tons in 1374 [21 March 1995 - 20 March 1996]. With the startup of the great Gol Gohar rock iron complex with an annual capacity of 2.75 million tons of concentrated rock iron and also with the increased return at the units that are already operating, the nation's production capacity has increased.

Likewise, with the completion and startup of the Chenareh and Howz Mahi rock iron mines, the steel industry's need for industrial rock iron has been met.

The growth in the production of concentrated copper during the years of the Five-Year Plan was to average 20.2 percent per year in the years under discussion, and this target was met so that in the period 1367 -1372 the production of concentrated copper increased from 170,000 tons to 363,000 tons in 1372 [21 March 1993 - 20 March 1994] and 370,000 tons in 1374.

The amount of rock coal extracted also increased from 1.452 million tons in 1367 to 1.055 million tons in 1372 and to about 2.1 million tons in the year 1374.

The number of active mines in the country increased from 1,400 units in 1367 to 2,328 units in 1372 and 2,400 units in 1374.

Steel Exports Instead of Imports

To make as much use as possible of mines to procure raw materials for the nation's producing factories and for mined materials exports, activities have been carried out to increase production. Consequently, the reduction in current expenses and increased efficiency are indicators of growth in the extraction of mining materials from the nation's active mines (without counting sand, gravel, and topsoil), with an average annual growth of 9.8 percent, increasing from 44.7 million tons in 1367 to 71.4 million tons in 1372 and to about 74.2 million tons in 1374.

In the metals sector, and especially steel, of which about 4 million tons were to have been imported at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan, with the increase in production from 1.34 million tons in 1367 to about 3.9 million tons in 1372 and 4.3 million tons in 1374, our country has become a steel-exporting country.

Production of Non-Ferrous Metals

In the area of the production of non-ferrous metals, the goals of the First Five-Year Plan, despite the very high growth it projected, were achieved. In the years of the Five-Year Plan, the production of copper anodes grew an average of 22 percent per year, which was the level projected in the Five-Year Plan. During this period the

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production of copper anodes grew from 58,000 tons in 1367 to more than 123,000 tons in 1374.

Likewise an average of 26.3 percent per year was added to recycled aluminum production, which was much more than the figure projected in the Five-Year Plan (18.5 percent).

Based on the Five-Year Plan projection, the production of aluminum was to have increased from 28,000 tons in 1367 to 65,300 tons in 1372, and this figure actually increased to 90,100 tons in 1372 and to more than 112,000 tons in 1374.

The first factory to produce lead ingots, gold ingots, cathode zinc sheets, and ferrous alloys from the nation's mining resources has gone into operation. In 1374, production of gold reached 650 kg, production of cathode zinc sheets reached 2,460 tons, zinc ingots 1,540 tons, and various ferrous alloys, 58,000 tons. With the operation of the nation's largest existing factory for refractory materials and also with the development of the existing refractory materials units with the construction in the country of the factory for procuring their domestic raw materials, the production of brick products and special refractory materials, with average annual growth of 6 percent, increased from 90,000 tons in 1367 to 120,000 tons in 1372 and to more than 130,000 tons in 1374. These products were formerly imported from abroad.

It is worth mentioning that zinc, gold, ferrous selenium, ferrous chrome, and alkaline refractory materials are new products which have been produced and marketed through the ceaseless efforts of our country's experts and specialists.

Exports of Raw and Mined Materials

In 1367 exports of raw and mined materials in the mines and metals sector was more than $147 million. Despite the sharp drop in world metals prices (up to about 50 percent), exports grew 28.3 percent, and in 1373 [21 March 1994 - 20 March 1995] their value reached $611 million.

Nation's Mining Reserves

In addition to its rich reserves in oil and gas, Iran has large mines. The nation's total mining reserves is estimated at 24 billion tons. The most important resources discovered to date and the estimated reserves for each one are as follows:

Rock coal, 2 billion tons, rock iron 4.7 billion tons;

Rock copper about 2.6 billion tons (with average assay of 0.8 percent);

Lead and zinc, 100 million tons (average assay 30 percent);
Aluminum, 92 million tons (average assay of 25 to 49 percent);
Phosphates, 10 million tons;
Magnesium, 4 million tons;
Alunite, 1 billion tons;
Feldspar potassium, 1 million tons;
Titanium, 2 million tons;
Silicon, 2 million tons;
Asbestos, 2 million tons;
Perlite, 5 million tons;
Chromite, 8.5 million tons (average assay, 45 percent);
Rock chalk, 2.4 billion tons;
Limestone, 4.5 billion tons;
Decorative stones, 3 billion tons, construction stones, about 3.7 billion tons.

Among the nation's other mining reserves, one can mention kaolin, bentonite, fluorite, dolomite, mica, diatomite, cobalt, uranium, strontium, molybdenite, gold, and construction materials.

Programs and Projects

In recent years, important projects have been built in the steel industries, including the projects mentioned which were opened by our country's president of the republic in the final year of the First Five-Year Plan. The following can be mentioned:

the Mobarakeh Steel Complex;
first Development Phase of the Esfahan Iron Foundry;
the official opening of the great Gol Gohar Rock Iron Complex in Sirjan, with an annual capacity of 2.75 million tons of concentrated iron;
the modernization and development of the Ahvaz Steel Complex;
the opening in Ezna of the first factory for producing ferrous selenium, with an annual capacity of 25,000 tons;
the opening of the mines and metals export-import dock in Bandar 'Abbas.

In 1373 there were also important industrial and mining projects such as Yazd Steel Alloy, Chadoromlu Rock Iron, Jajorm Bauxite, Miduk Copper, Sangun Copper of Ahar, and the planning and equipping of the Bauxite mine at Gineh.

Private Sector Investment

Under the law, for private sector companies to be active in the mining sector they need to obtain authorization from the Ministry of Mines and Metals. The applicant must begin exploration operations within one year

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after the authorization is issued. The activation of any discovered mine is done under a five-year contract. To attract more private sector investment for second degree mines, currently the Ministry of Mines and Metals has proposed four options, as follows:

—after a mine is discovered, the expenses along with a "discovery prize" will be paid to the person, and he will give his information to the ministry;
—with respect to the large mines, government companies will take part;
—with the cooperation of government companies, a cooperative company will be established and will operate independently;
—when authorization to operate is obtained, operations will be permitted for several years based on the amount of the reserves and the opinion of the Supreme Mining Council.

Likewise, the credit resources for the cooperative companies and the private sector will be given to the qualified applicants. As the result of these measures, in 1374, of the 2,400 active mines, more than 1,400 came to be managed directly by the private sector.

On the other hand, to increase the activities in the mining sector and to make use of advanced technology, attention was given to making use of foreign specialists, and the Ministry of Mines and Metals presented programs for this purpose within a special framework.

Our country, with respect to the variety of its mined materials and especially its variety of construction stones, is exceptional in the world. Apart from the fact that it has no peer in this respect, it has rich mining reserves. This will make possible the long-term operation of the nation's mines and it will be possible to make profits from them for a long time.

Engineer Khosrow Juzdani, executive director of the Iran General Mines Corporation, said that the aforementioned company is 100 percent government operated and affiliated with the Ministry of Mines and Metals. He said that 1.6 million tons of construction rock and decorative stone were extracted last year. He added: In addition to the decorative stone, this company also has the Takhalak mine, one of the nation's oldest, most beautiful, and most complete lead mines, located 145 km from Na'in. Along with that, it operates the nation's most active mining training facilities.

The Neyshabur Turquoise mine, with production of 20,000 tons per year, is also under the company's mantle. Its operations were stagnating due to smuggled imports of undesirable and cheap American turquoise across the Afghan border. Now that the low quality of the American turquoise has become clear, the Neyshabur mine has begun thriving again.

Mr. Juzdani discussed the red clay mines on Hormoz Island and their use in the paint industries. He said: After this product has been made into powder and packaged, it can be exported as well as consumed domestically.

Wire Cutting Used instead of Explosives

He then discussed the mines in the Laybid region in Dalijan-Mimeh area of Esfahan. He added: These mines are extracted using the best technical principles. To help protect the environment, the sides of the roads leading to the mine have been planted with 53,000 trees and the roads have been paved.

The use of explosives and combustible materials such as dynamite for extractions at the aforementioned mines, as in all the other mines under the mantle of the Iran General Mines Corporation, is completely prohibited. Instead, the method of cutting with wire is used. Despite the fact that this costs more than the explosives method, because it protects the environment and also prevents the destruction of the mined rocks, it is still more economical. This is because when using explosives, about 70 percent of the rocks are destroyed, while only 10 percent are destroyed using the wire-cutting method, and this is only due to the breakage within the chunks of rock.

Elsewhere in his talk, Eng. Juzdani discussed the construction by the Iran General Mines Corporation of two model factories for production of products from construction and decorative stones. He said: These factories will be put into operation by late in the month of Shahrivar [23 August - 22 September] in the Na'in area and in the Jushqan part of Mimeh, in the Esfahan area. Their capacity is 220,000 cubic meters of cut construction stones. Conditions are quite favorable for exporting their products.

Short-Term Mining Training

For many years, mining was considered an unbearable and dangerous profession, but with advances in human knowledge and the availability of new construction methods, there have been significant reductions in the problems with mining work.

Eng. Juzdani emphasized the necessity and importance of continuous mining training. He said: Along with the Takhalak mine, with the cooperation of the Plan and Budget Organization we have undertaken to conduct short-term classes in mining so that workers in the government and non-government mines and metals sectors will be able to attend them free. Another training facility has also been built next to the Laybid Mine,

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whose training cycles have also received a very good and desirable welcome.

With respect to the problems of mining workers, he said: According to legislation by the Islamic Consultative Majles, contractors for construction stones are required to pay 5 percent of their sales into the tax accounts of the governorates. In view of the sharp increase in the prices of mining machinery and the relative stagnation in the prices of construction stones, the payment of these sums creates problems, and it would be appropriate, instead of the taxing the total sales, for the governorates to tax a percentage of the profits of the contractors, to keep from endangering the new system of mine extraction (wire cutting) because of contractors withdrawing from the trade or going bankrupt.

Capabilities of Iranian Specialists

Mr. Juzdani discussed the activities of the two factories in Tehran and Borujerd that produce the equipment for cutting mined stones with wire. He said: In my belief, the specialists in our country are the world's best mining specialists in every respect. If they receive continuous support, they will be able to show greater creativity. Support for this claim is to be seen in the 500-percent growth in mining products factories during the last four years.

Iranian specialists are also capable of eliminating our nation's need to import any kind of foreign machinery for mining production and of building them domestically. We have seen the truth of this demonstrated in recent years with the construction of large and small factories for lead, copper, zinc, and iron by the capable hands of Iranian specialists. If parts are imported today, it is because only a limited number are needed and it is therefore not economical to produce them. If there were a need to mass produce these parts, it would be both economical and possible to do so.

According to Eng. Juzdani, the use of stone on the facades and interiors of buildings will make them beautiful and more sanitary and will prolong their lives. In general, wherever a mine is discovered and exploited, employment increases at that location and the region's economy flourishes.

Nation's Steel Production

The production of steel in Iran began with the operation of the Esfahan Iron Foundry in 1350 [21 March 1971 - 20 March 1972]. The Iran National Steel Company, which is the result of the consolidation of the Iran National Steel Company and the Iran National Steel Industries Company, began its operations in 1359 [21 March 1980 - 20 March 1981].

The Iran National Steel Company is responsible for managing and making policy on the nation's steel industry, along with the mines for iron, coal and industrial lime (needed in the steel industries), and also for the production, distribution and marketing of various steel products and making the investments needed to develop this industry.

As the principal shareholder in 18 active companies, the Iran General Mines Corporation exercises full management and oversight over 12 major projects in steel and construction of docks for the export and import of mining materials and the related infrastructure, along with providing the needed engineering and research services.

The great steel complexes affiliated with this company include: Esfahan Steel Factory, Khuzestan Steel Industries, Mobarakeh Steel Complex, and the Steel Alloy Company.

Gold Mines There is a long history of extracting gold from the Muteh Gold Mine of Esfahan, using traditional methods. In the years 1334 - 1344 [21 March 1955 - 20 March 1966] they adopted more advanced methods for doing this work, and after a period of time the extraction of the gold stopped.

Gold extraction activity resumed again in 1359 [21 March 1980 -20 March 1981]. Research work, which went on until 1365 [21 March 1986 - 20 March 1987], showed that there were veins of gold on the surface which would make it possible to mine gold assayed at four grams per ton using the open pit method. The gold reserves at Muteh are estimated about 1.222 million tons.

The letter of agreement to explore and extract gold at Mimeh (Esfahan Province) was signed late in 1370 [21 March 1991 - 20 March 1992]. The daily production capacity at the Muteh-Mimeh gold mines is 500 tons of ore, expected to yield 2-5 kg of gold.

Likewise, because of the roughly 85 tons of gold reserves at Zarshuran and Aghdareh in West Azerbaijan, the necessary steps are being taken to build a factory to mine and refine the gold at the aforementioned mines.

Important Second Five-Year Plan Projects

In addition to the great projects that have been carried out in recent years, under the Second National Five-Year Development Plan the Ministry of Mines and Metals plans expects to complete more great and important projects, the most important of which are the following:

—the rock iron mine (Sangan) in the Province of Khorasan, with the capacity of 1.9 million tons of concentrated iron;

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—development of the Gol Gohar Rock Iron Complex. Its current annual production capacity is 2.75 million tons of concentrated rock iron, which will increase to five million tons per year;
—development of the Chegharat Iron Project. Its current capacity is 3.2 million tons per year, which will increase to 6 million tons per year;
—the Bariket-e Garm Iron Factory in Kerman, with an annual capacity of one million tons;
—the ferrous manganese factory in the Qeshm Free Trade Zone, with an annual capacity of 30,000 tons of carbon ferro-manganese;
—the galvanizing line at the Mobarakeh Steel Complex, with an annual capacity of 220,000 tons;
—the tin-plating line at the Mobarakeh Steel Complex, with an annual capacity of 145,000 tons;
—the Ahvaz Steel Complex Coarse Steel Sheeting Line, with an annual capacity of one million tons of coarse sheeting with a width of 2,300 millimeters;
—the Alumina Production Complex in East Azerbaijan, with an annual capacity of 200,000 tons of alumina, 2,400,000 tons of cement and 150,000 tons of sodium carbonate and potassium;
—the Miduk Copper Mine in the Province of Kerman, with an annual capacity of concentrated copper;
—the Sungun Copper Mine of Ahar in East Azerbaijan, with an annual capacity of 350,000 tons of concentrate;
—the factory to produce titanium pigment in the Province of Kerman, with an annual capacity of 120,000 tons of concentrated ilmenite and 25,000 tons of titanium pigment;
—the extraction and refinement of zinc metal from zinc concentrate in the Province of Zanjan, with an annual capacity of 10,000 tons of zinc metal;
—the zinc foundry in Zanjan, with an annual capacity of 100,000 tons of zinc metal;
—the factory producing graphite electrodes in the Qeshm Free Trade Zone, with an annual capacity of 40,000 tons of graphite electrodes.

Worker Training

One of the successes of the Ministry of Mines and Metals is worker training at all levels so that at the end of the First Five-Year Plan the number of people on the job with bachelor's degrees tripled and about 100,000 persons had gone through training cycles at the worker, journeyman, expert and guidance expert levels.

Under the First Five-Year Plan, the following projects were carried out:

—construction of the College of Mines and Metallurgy at Amir Kabir Industrial University;
—construction of the College of Metallurgy at Tehran University;
—development and equipping of the Esfahan Towhid Training Center;
—equipping the Ahvaz Steel Industries Company Training Center;
—completion and Equipping of the Sarcheshmeh Copper Complex Training Center;
—completion of the Project To Build the Mining Training Center of East Alborz (Shahrud);
—completion of the Project to Build the Central Rock Iron Mining Training Center;
—developing and equipping the National Geology Unit;
—completing Development of the Nakhlak Mining Training Center;
—completion of the Anguran Mining Training Center;
—construction of the Mining and Industry Training Center at Birjand;
—building and equipping the Gajreh Mining Training Center.

On the other hand, in the research sector, in addition to the creation of large mining and metallurgy research centers, during the First Five-Year Plan more than 140 applied research projects were carried out, and by the end of 1373 [20 March 1995] 171 applied research programs and projects had been carried out. With the results they have achieved, millions of dollars in foreign exchange will be saved, and this has played an important role in reducing energy consumption and increasing manpower efficiency.

The cost of the research in the mines and metals sector increased from 596 million rials [R] in the year 1367 to R54.5 billion during the Second Five-Year Plan. The economic effects resulting from the implementation of the research programs and projects are as follows:

—foreign exchange savings, about $225 million, which was achieved through implementation of 42 of the 140 aforementioned projects and programs; —increased quality and quantity and increased variety in the products produced by the units currently operating; —conducting training and then semi-industrial (pilot) studies and research on projects, some of which should go into production or into the threshold of design.

Reducing Steel Production Foreign Exchange Consumption

Today the Ministry of Mines and Metals generally obtains all of the ministry's internal financial resources without relying on foreign exchange earned from oil exports or rials from development resources, the expenses needed for current production or development and reconstruction projects.

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In the area of zinc metal production, sponge iron, ferrous alloys, refractory materials and construction, the steel industry has the technology. In the areas of design, construction and operation of steel industries, they have become self-sufficient. Examples of their accomplishments are the construction of the kaolin factories in Turkmenistan, the bauxite plant in Gineh and also the manufacture of heavy parts.

On the other hand, the foreign exchange used in production of a ton of steel has decreased from $180 to an average of $60, and likewise the decorative stone mines, which were formerly extracted with explosives, have now become some of the world's most beautiful and modern mines.

Our nation's mines and metals products are already being exported to Japan, South Korea, China, Italy and many other nations in the world. The Ministry of Mines and Metals has held an outstanding position in reforming management structures, reducing the volume of activities and the number of government workers, turning work over to the cooperative sectors and to former prisoners of war, educated forces and domestic experts and workers.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Rules Out Signing CTBT Unless India Does So First

BK0808135496 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has declared categorically that Pakistan gives top priority to national security concerns and would not sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty unless India does so first. Addressing a large tribal jergah [assembly] at Ramzak in North Waziristan Agency, the prime minister said there is no question of signing the CTBT by Pakistan unilaterally. We will not sign it unless nuclear-capable countries, like India and Israel, do not sign the treaty [sentence as heard]. She said her government was taking determined measures to consolidate more and more the country's defense. Tension in the South Asian Subcontinent prevails because of the ever increasing military buildup of India, which has consistently violated international conventions. It has already tested atomic devices and is now at a very advanced stage of nuclear technology development. The prime minister said India has already refused to sign CTBT. Pakistan, therefore, cannot sacrifice its national defense, she declared.

The prime minister said we are aware of our national defense needs and are in the process of equipping our defense forces with the latest weapons and armor. She said despite monetary constraints, her government has managed to purchase submarines for Pakistan's navy, has gone ahead with the purchase of tanks from Ukraine, 70 of which will reach Pakistan within the current calendar year. To strengthen our aerial borders, used Mirage aircraft are to be purchased, while efforts are afoot to produce new aircraft. She said arms and ammunition purchased from the United States earlier were also to arrive soon in the wake of adoption of the Brown Amendment. All these concrete steps, the prime minister said, would help make the country's defense impregnable.

The prime minister inaugurated the Lucky Cement Plant near Lakki Marwat today. This plant has been set up in private sector at a cost of over 4 billion rupees in NWFP [North-West Frontier Province]. It is the country's biggest cement factory with its own power plant. Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said it is the policy of the government to encourage new industries in the less developed areas of the country. She said the international private investors now consider Pakistan as the most secure country for investment. She said during the past two and half years, foreign investment of over $3 billion was made while MoU's [memorandums of understanding] for $23 billion were signed.

Pakistan: Spokesman Reaffirms 'Principled Position' on CTBT

BK0808113796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has again made it clear that it will never accept unilaterally any obligation which can compromise its nuclear program. A Foreign Office spokesman told newsmen in Islamabad today that Indian nuclear and ballistic missiles program poses an immediate and direct threat to Pakistan's security, and there is serious imbalance in the conventional forces of the two countries. Given its apprehensions, Pakistan has always sought to advance nonproliferation in South Asia on a nondiscriminatory basis and will not sign the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] unless India adheres to it.

The spokesman regretted the continuing controversy on the CTBT in the country despite several categorical statements by the president, prime minister, foreign minister, and chief of army staff. He described the controversy as unfortunate and said it does not help Pakistan's cause in a sensitive matter. The spokesman said parameters of Pakistan's principled position on the nuclear issue are based on six fundamentals. These are: Pakistan's security interests, India's nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles program, Pakistan's determination to

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safeguard its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute in accordance with UN resolutions and reduction of tension in the region, serious imbalances in conventional forces between India and Pakistan, and danger of proliferation and global efforts to realize nonproliferation and disarmament.

He said the resolution of the Kashmir issue, which is the core of the problem between India and Pakistan, is an imperative that can no longer be avoided.

The spokesman stated in unequivocal terms that decision regarding signing or otherwise of the CTBT will be taken, keeping in view the final shape of the text, position of other countries, especially in our region; and our security interests which we will alone determine.

Pakistan: Opposition Leader Wants 'No-War Pact' With India

BK0808161696 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 8 Aug 96 p 12

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi — Leader of the Opposition Mian Nawaz Sharif has said he wants a no-war pact with India as war is no solution to the problems.

The former prime minister said: "We want to check nuclear proliferation, but will never compromise on the security of Pakistan. We are an independent and sovereign nation and are not bound by the Indian stand on the nuclear issue." He stated this while talking to newsmen on Wednesday [7 August] at a lunch hosted by a local party leader.

The newsmen asked him about his meeting with the US Ambassador to India, Frank Wisner. The PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz] president said they discussed matters concerning solution to the Kashmir issue, Indo-Pak relations and other issues. Sharif said he told Mr. Wisner: "If the United States wants to help in solving the Kashmir issue we welcome it. War is no solution. We want to live as a good neighbor with India."

He said Pakistan should declare its policy on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in clear terms like India which refused to sign the treaty. "We want a no-war pact with India and hope that the world would treat us friendly." Sharif said his party was in favor that Pakistan and India should hold talks on the Kashmir issue, but warned that no compromise would be accepted. The former prime minister said an interim government formed with the consensus of all the political parties should hold free and fair elections under an independent election commission.

He alleged that the government was itself patronizing terrorism in the country and had failed to control terrorism and bomb blasts.

On the economic front, the opposition leader said that Pakistan's balance of payments deficit had risen manifold during the last three years and the rupee was consistently being devalued, creating more inflation, unemployment and closure of a large number of industries. At the same time foreign exchange reserves were depleting, he said.

Our Hyderabad correspondent reports: Later on Wednesday night while addressing and Awami Assembly here Nawaz Sharif said after getting mandate from the masses through the sessions of 'Awami Assemblies' at various cities and towns, the final strategy will be announced for the ouster of what he termed a corrupt govt.

As the existence of sitting incompetent and undemocratic government is the question of country's survival, the opposition parties had formed "Pakistan Bachao Tehreek" to save the country, Nawaz Sharif said.

Expressing concern over the state atrocities in Karachi, Nawaz said innocent people are being killed extrajudicially, while thousands of youths were thrown behind the bars, only because of their affiliation with MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement].

PML-N chief said time was ripe as the insufficient, incompetent, undemocratic and corrupt government has to go, because there was no way except ousting of the government.

He said Karachi's youths are not the terrorists, and Naseerullah Babar is the patroniser of the terrorists, who ordered the killing of the youths in so-called encounters. While leveling serious charges of corruption on Benazir Bhutto and Asif Zardari, Nawaz said every penny of the nation's wealth will be recovered from the rulers. He promised that through the accountability process illegal properties, including the Surrey Palace will be auctioned and from the recovered money, loans will be repaid.

Pakistan: Comprehensive Steps Proposed To Enhance Trade With Iran

BK0708133596 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 7 Aug 96 p 13

[PPI report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Aug 6 — Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran Khalid Mahmud Tuesday [6

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August] proposed comprehensive measures to enhance bilateral trade between Tehran and Islamabad.

Delivering a talk on "economic dimensions of Pakistan-Iran relations" here at the Institute of Strategic Studies he said exchange of business delegations between the two countries should take place more frequently and suggested issuance of multiple visa for six months to businessmen on reciprocal basis on the recommendations of respective chambers of commerce.

He suggested signing of an agreement on "carnet de passage" so as to increase transit trade through Iran. He was of the opinion that the proposal for establishment of common border markets needs to be examined as it would help in reducing the volume of informal trade which presently exists between the two countries. Ambassador Khalid Mahmud said Pakistan and Iran should allow opening of branches of their banks in each other's country. He said Iran should reduce period of 'issuance" from 360 days to 120 days for imports from Pakistan. He said efforts should be made to remove the non-tariff barriers adding that preferential tariff arrangements should be made at bilateral level or under the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization]. He said the list of the items to be covered under this arrangement from the both sides should be carefully worked out so that those items are included which are being actually traded between the two countries or have the potential of being traded.

The ambassador of Pakistan to Iran said both the countries should make efforts to diversify the export of various items from each side. He pointed out that a promising beginning was made to get out of the usual oil-rice trade patterns when agreements were signed for supply of one thousand bulldozers by Iran to Pakistan against the export of one sugar and one cement plants and other engineering goods from Pakistan.

He was of the view that the proposal for establishment of common border markets needs to be examined as it would help reduce the volume of "informal trade" which presently exists between the two countries.

He said the utilisation of US dollars 50 million export credit should be facilitated, particularly by the private sector.

Khalid Mahmud said trade flow needs to be supplemented by investment flow adding that private sector's participation from within or outside the region is vital to the success of the regional cooperative efforts.

He said not withstanding the fact that both the countries are capital deficient, Pakistan and Iran have constantly been making efforts to increase mutual economic cooperation. He also referred to the agreements signed by the two countries during Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's visit to Iran in November last and said steps are afoot to implement these agreements.

He said the Pakistan-Iran oil refinery with the capacity of six million tons of oil per year to be built at Hub, Karachi at an estimated cost of US dollars one billion and construction of a gas pipeline between Iran and Pakistan are mega projects which will open new vistas of economic cooperation between the two countries.

He observed that the gas pipeline will provide a big assured market to Iran for the sale of its gas and a reliable source of supply to the gas-thirsty Pakistan, whose own sources of gas are deleting against a fast increasing demand.

He said it is a matter of great satisfaction that both Iran and Pakistan are equally sensitive to the fact that trade and economic development cannot be separated from progress or political issues and that without peace and stability in the region, economic policies cannot be pursued smoothly.

He said regular consultations are held between Iran and Pakistan to devise ways and means to resolve the Kashmir dispute and to bring about peaceful national reconciliation in Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

He said the world is witnessing political and economic changes of global, proportions with the end of the cold war and hoped that the post cold war era in this part of the world will be characterised by a quest for increased economic and commercial cooperation for the benefit of peoples of Pakistan and Iran.

Khalid Mahmud said the unique geo-strategic and geo-economic locations of Pakistan and Iran lend the two countries to serve as a lynch pin for bringing unprecedented growth and prosperity to themselves and the region.

Pakistan: UN Afghan Envoy Satisfied With Talks in Kabul

BK0608152596 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 6 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The special envoy of the UN secretary general, Mr. Norbert Holl, has called for an immediate end to bloodshed in Afghanistan to pave the way for political settlement of the issue. Mr. Norbert Holl was addressing a press conference in Islamabad on his return from Afghanistan. He said he held detailed meetings with Afghan leaders of various factions giving him a chance to understand the issue. He said the main objective of the UN mission is to end bloodshed in Afghanistan and encourage a political solution of

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the Afghanistan conflict. In reply to a question about imposing arms embargo on Afghanistan, Mr. Norbert Holl said this is an important issue, but it is not on the formal agenda of the UN mission.

Later talking to Pakistan Television representative Mohammad Awaiz Bhutt, Mr. Holl expressed satisfaction over the outcome of his visit to Afghanistan. [Begin Holl recording] I am satisfied with my talks with the various leaders in Kabul. Then, I also went to Mazar-e Sharif. I met with Dostum and his closest associates, and yesterday I was in Qandahar where he met with the leadership of the Taleban. I think that these meetings were very useful. [end recording]

Pakistan: Prime Minister Views Boorda Suicide, Mud-Slinging

BK0808163796 Karachi DAWN in English 8 Aug 96 p 11

[Article by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto: " The Power of Mud"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] I was deeply saddened when I read about the suicide of Adm. James Boorda, the American chief of naval operations. What disturbed me so greatly was that, according to reports, his act was precipitated by an investigative article that the admiral believed might lead to personal shame or dishonor.

So he chose to end his life rather than face the scandal that he saw coming. What was the scandal about? It boiled down to whether Boorda should have worn a small bronze star that costs less than a dollar. He already had a chestful of medals to prove his valour and service — he really didn't need one more.

His supporters said he was entitled to wear the star. Others said that, technically, he was not. Although Boorda called it an "honest mistake," whether he was entitled to wear it or not is now irrelevant.

I remember reading about a French prime minister who took his own life over a scandal about unproved charges of obtaining a loan through a political favor. And apparently, Vince Foster, a White House lawyer, committed suicide because he could not cope with the pressures of his public life in Washington, D.C.

These deaths demonstrate that intense public scrutiny leading to a public trial can cause immense damage. It can cause stress, shock trauma, shame and even the desire to end it all.

A public trial, or especially a trial in the court of public opinion is neither fair nor detached. It takes place in a highly charged atmosphere with accusations and counter-accusations coming so fast that the details are blurred. The public is confused, and the image is tarnished.

Wasn't it Joseph Goebbels who said that if you throw enough mud some of it will stick? I should know. During my first term as prime minister of Pakistan, from 1988 to 1990, I was the target of a sustained campaign of character assassination aimed at unconstitutionally undermining the people's belief in the government I had formed. I went blue in the face protesting my innocence, to no avail. As soon as the government I led was dismissed in a 1990 civil coup d'etat, I was sent a chilling message: "Leave the country or your husband will face the same fate as your father." In other words, he would face a death sentence on trumped-up charges.

Simultaneously, a diplomat was sent to my father-in-law by the new regime: "Tell your son to divorce his wife and leave the country, or he will have to face terrible consequences," the messenger informed him.

But my husband and I refused to leave. For us, it was a matter of honour to prove our innocence. But the threats we received proved not to be idle. I was hauled up on seven charges of "misconduct." My husband was charged with seven separate counts, ranging from abuse of power to kidnapping to murder.

We were called "corrupt" daily in the Press and on the TV and radio. And, although the legal charge against us was not corruption, this became the label the Press used to attack us. I was glad that my children were too young to understand what was going on. They couldn't read what was said in the papers, and they had not yet started going to school where they would have had to suffer the taunts of schoolmates.

Even my own relatives and friends seemed to get a skeptical look. After all, the saying goes that where there's smoke, there's fire and in my case, the Press created a great deal of smoke. Every time I would meet an acquaintance I would have to explain all the facts yet again, so that they could face their friends.

That was the most terrible part to be presumed guilty, no matter what we said or did.

But my husband and I stayed the course. I am proud to say that we both won all our cases in the courts and legally proved our innocence. More than that, we faced the court of popular opinion and were reelected to office, politically redeeming ourselves. Our honor was vindicated, as was the honor of my party and colleagues. We were able to hold our heads high throughout. Leopards don't change their spots, however, and my adversaries continue to make totally unsubstantiated and wild charges of corruption against my Party, my government and my family. They refuse to talk about

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the issues... about the democratic process, demographic pressures and the debt trap that Pakistan faces. It seems their manifesto is mudslinging, and the truth is the first victim.

I read that an American first lady once said she didn't recognize herself in the way the Press sometimes portrayed her. She articulated my sentiments exactly.

Of course the public has the right to know the facts. Of course the Press has a right to sniff out a story. But the individual also has a right to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence until proven guilty.

Here I would like to state that journalists investigating the story cannot be held responsible for the admiral's suicide. But it is time that we searched for some sort of yardstick to guide us in terms of fair comment and good judgment.

I was always sensitive as a child, and I think I am still sensitive today. But I have built a wall around myself to protect me from sustained character assassination. Naturally, it still hurts at times, but I am pretty single-minded in my determination not to let the dirty tricks of my opponents deter me from fulfilling the public mandate I received.

My heart goes out to Boorda's widow and his family, who lost him because of an "honest mistake."

I can only repeat the words of President Clinton, "I wish the commander-in-chief had told him that this is not worth killing yourself for."

Pakistan: Minister—Strikes Caused Loss of 50 Billion Rupees

BK0808163896 Karachi DAWN in English 8 Aug 96 p 3

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, Aug 7 — The country has, so far, lost over 50 billion rupees owing to 43 opposition strikes which has forced the government to levy additional taxes and exposed it to increasing international pressure.

This was stated by the Federal Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs N D Khan at a news conference on Wednesday [7 August].

Mr. Khan said the people were fed up with the politics of agitation and asked the opposition whether its aim was to change the government or to ruin the country's economy through strikes and agitations.

He said a day's strike causes a loss of Rs 2 billion whereas the opposition and its allies have so far given 43 strike calls.

He asked the people, specially the youth, to ignore the opposition's strike call because its only agenda was to spread unemployment, anarchy and economic ruination.

The opposition, he said, has no agenda for its anti-government agitation and was just wandering in a wrong direction because procedure for a change has been clearly defined in the Constitution.

If someone tries to undermine the democratic process in mid-way, he would be repeating the same mistake which the PNA [Pakistan National Alliance] had committed in 1977 during its movement and capitulated to the forces which imposed Martial Law instead of establishing Nizam-i-Mustafa.

Flaying the Jamaat-i-Islami [JI] for trying to create Bangladesh-like situation, he said the JI should first look at its own mandate which is clear from the solitary seat it secured in the AJK [Azad Jammu and Kashmir] elections.

Mr. Khan also mentioned the contents of his letter addressed to the JI chief and said could be the basis for talks between PPP [Pakistan People's Party] and the Jamaat Islami. He regretted that so far the opposition party had not responded to the government's offer which was based on the statements of the JI chief.

The Law Minister had offered talks on the eradication of corruption, implementation of Article 62 of Constitution and Jamaat-i-Islami's perception of a Western culture.

Mr Khan also castigated the PML [Pakistan Muslim League] for its campaign to oust the government. He said the opposition leader should return the bank's seven billion rupees and let the people know as to how he piled up 32 factories.

He said the government would also like to know who the leader of the 14 party alliance was so that it could initiate a dialogue with it.

Acknowledging the opposition's right to agitate on issues, he said being a responsible opposition, it could have a consensus with the govt. on issues like Kashmir, nuclear, 8th Amendment, terrorism, sectarianism, drug mafia, national security and corruption.

Pakistan: MQM Leader Blames Government for Bomb Blasts

BK0608100996 Karachi AMN in Urdu 23 Jul 96 p 1

[Unattributed Report]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 22 July (AMN News) — Altaf Hussain, the leader of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement [MQM], has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the horrible bomb blast at Lahore airport,

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in which several people were killed and others injured. The MQM chief said the incident shows that the present government has failed miserably in protecting the life and property of the people and, thus, it has no right to remain in the saddle. He urged the president to end his silence over the inefficiency of the government and to dismiss it at once. Describing the recent bombings at important places like the Lahore airport as a very serious and alarming development, Altaf Hussain said such incidents may affect Pakistan's image and deal a serious blow to its tourism industry and the economy as a whole. He emphatically said the government is solely responsible for all these incidents. This is because it has removed agencies responsible for national defense and security from their respective fundamental duties and assigned them to crush its political opponents. Every activity of the government's political opponents is being reported to the Prime Minister Secretariat, while terrorists and subversive elements have been given free license with the life and property of the people.

The MQM leader said dozens of bombings have occurred in the country, but no criminal has been arrested yet in this connection. This reinforces our fears that these explosions are being engineered by the government itself to deflect people's attention from the "remove the government" campaign launched by the opposition. Expressing his heartfelt sympathy with the next of kin of those killed in the bomb blast, Altaf Hussain demanded compensation for the affected people.

Pakistan: Over 100 SSP Activists Reportedly Detained

BK0808163496 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 8 Aug 96 p 1

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — Punjab police in a massive crackdown in the last 36 hours detained more than 100 activists of Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) (an extremist/militant Sunni organization) under 3-MPO [maintenance of public order] for 90 days.

Police officials here confirmed that these Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan activists were detained under MPO after the recent murders of Sargodha Commissioner and a Shia leader in Lahore.

Pakistan: First Batch of Altaf Group Workers To Be Released on 14 Aug

BK0808161796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] First batch of the detained Altaf Group activists will be released on 14 August. This was stated by Afaq Shahid, the minister of state for works and also chairman of the committee for the release of the detainees, at a news conference in Karachi this afternoon. He said that under the prime minister's instructions, financial assistance will also be provided to the released persons, so that they do not face any financial difficulties. You might recall that the prime minister had set up a committee to review the cases of the detained workers who were used by some mischievous elements to achieve their nefarious designs. The above facility will be extended only to those detained persons who were not involved in murder and other heinous crimes.

Pakistan: Six Injured in Shi'ite Demonstrations in Lahore

BK0808154896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Activists of the Shi'ite students organizations, ISO, and Sipah-i-Muhammad workers held violent demonstrations outside the Imamia Colony near Lahore today to press their demand for the release of their detained compatriots. They blocked the Grand Trunk Road by burning tires. According to the APP, when the police tried to disperse the demonstrators, they resorted to shooting, injuring about six people, including four policemen. One of the injured, a passerby, later succumbed to his injuries in the hospital.

Pakistan: Government Incentives Draw Foreign Investment Into Industry

MS0808121396 London THE EUROPEAN in English 8-14 Aug 96 p 25

[Report by Elizabeth Mottershaw: "Incentives Draw $1 Billion of Foreign Money Into Industry"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government's board investment recently announced that direct foreign investment in fiscal year 1995/96 will reach nearly $1 billion.

That investment is focused on the power sector, chemicals, oil and gas, and is coming mainly from the United States, Britain, and the Middle and Far East. [Prime Minister] Benazir Bhutto's government has been internationally recognised as making all the right moves. It has pioneered the concept of using foreign and private investment to meet the country's enormous electricity requirements, provided incentives to encourage industrial projects, and identified the need to rid itself of a burdensome public sector.

However, doubts about Pakistan's political stability and new economic uncertainty are raising questions about the cohesion of these policies.

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Policies guiding foreign investment in the power sector were born of a $1.6 billion deal finalised in 1994 under which Britain's National Power, together with Xenel Industries of Saudi Arabia will design, build, finance, own and operate a 1,292 megawatt power station. The project had World Bank backing, in the form of a partial-risk guarantee, making it an attractive and secure investment.

After that landmark deal, the government published a policy framework which included standardised agreements for implementing private power projects, and fiscal incentives such as exemption from import licence fees. Foreign investors, including Germany's Siemens Power Ventures and Ireland's ESB International, clamoured to put their money into Pakistani power, and the government can now be confident of meeting its power requirements. Private investment in power projects is likely to total $4bn, most of it from abroad.

The government has used similar incentives to entice money into industry. Tax holidays and sales and import tax exemptions have all been made available, resulting in proposals for projects such as a $450m petrochemicals plant to be built by ICI [Imperial Chemical Industries], a container terminal at Karachi planned by American President Lines, and a $650m hydrocracker to be built by the United Arab Emirates-based Crescent Petroleum Company.

But the picture is not all good. In July the government shelved two multi-million-dollar power projects, one to be built by Enron Corporation of the U.S. and the other by a local company. The government appears to have reneged on agreements it had already signed, calling into question its credibility in the eyes of future investors. An IMF official suggested a possible explanation. "Perhaps the government supported too many projects," he said. "But there was a fine line between supporting too many and getting enough implemented".

Pakistan has also been keen to attract foreign money to its privatisation programme but, says one analyst, a chequered record and failure to stick to its own timetable is detracting from the programme's attractiveness. In the power sector, events have so far gone to plan, and in June the government sold a 26 percent stake in a 1,600 megawatt power station to National Power.

The privatisation of the second largest commercial bank, however, was brought to a standstill in May by allegations of corruption and the accusation that the preferred bidder — a Saudi Arabian company — could not meet government conditions. The sale of a 26 per cent stake in the state-owned Pakistan Telecommunication Company is due to go through by the end of the year but is bound to be affected by news that AT&T of the U.S. is no longer interested.

Foreign investors also see economic and political uncertainty. The 1996/97 budget included an increase of sales tax to 18 percent and the removal of virtually all exemptions, disappointing business and industry. After clashes between demonstrators and police and pressure from the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce, the government cut sales tax to ten percent in major sectors.

One economist commented: "Foreign investors will be wary of such uncertainty. The government not only sets itself growth and borrowing targets which it is pushed to achieve but it changes aspects of the budget after just one month."

The government has doubtless put its mind to attracting foreign money, but there is a feeling among potential investors that Islamabad must work harder at creating the stability needed for its policies to succeed.

Pakistan: Foreign Office Goes 'Overboard' in Criticizing Local Press

BK0608134896 Islamabad THE NATION in English 6 Aug 96 pp 1, 11

[Article by Fahd Husain: "FO Goes Overboard"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The Foreign Office has refuted a story published in this newspaper entitled "Pakistan on the Verge of a Nuclear Blast: SUNDAY TIMES", but in doing so it has gone overboard in directing its guns at the local press instead of spitting venom against the British publication which carried it.

Said the Foreign Office statement: "While the original SUNDAY TIMES article was mischievous enough and directed at maligning the community of Pakistan origin in the United Kingdom, it only raked up earlier tendentious reports that Pakistan was planning its first nuclear explosion, which had been refuted by the Foreign Ministry. The version in the local Pakistani press exaggerated this into 'Pakistan on the Verge of a Nuclear Blast'". It went on to say, "The allegations contained in the SUNDAY TIMES article and its local variant are not only unfounded but misleading and are strongly denied."

While one does not hold grudge against the contradiction per se, the tone of the language used against the local press smacks not only of ignorance but also of spitefulness by the Foreign Office. If the bureaucrat were a little more aware of the working of the press the world over, they would have known that from time to time every newspaper and publication "lifts" news reports and articles from other papers if they might be of interest to

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the local readership. "Lifting" a report or reprinting it does not mean that the publication agrees with its contents.

It is not our duty to teach the Foreign Office the fundamentals of journalism but unfortunately these basics are not taught to the bureaucrats at the Civil Services Academy and therefore we have to condescend to a level where it becomes essential to impart this basic education to those who hold the reins of foreign policy formulation in their hands.

In any case, it is a proven fact that when it comes to guarding the basic tenants of foreign policy and national interest, the Foreign Office lags far behind the Pakistani press. If it were not for the press, many a "sell-outs" would already have taken place. Was it the press which spread confusion over the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty]?

Next time, the Foreign Office should be a little more careful when it sits down to pen a contradiction.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Minister Briefs Parliament on Mullaittivu Battle

BK0808123896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The deputy defense minister, General Anuruddha Ratwatte, said that the government will take full responsibility for the safety of the people whilst protecting the sovereignty and integrity of Sri Lanka. General Ratwatte told parliament yesterday that it was naturally not possible to give exact figures of the losses at the Mullaittivu battle. The country is anxious to know the facts, the fate of our troops, and general information is inadequate to conclude specifically the number killed or wounded in action, he said.

The minister, in a very comprehensive speech, said he did not consider Mullaittivu a military loss since battles are lost and won in warfare. He said the Army responded to the call from Mullaittivu within 15 minutes of the first call. Troop movements were planned both by sea and air, and in fact the first heavy landing of troops took place within 10 hours of the first information. He said that he was fully satisfied with the Army's preparedness for any attack was backed by very good feedback. The minister described the hard circumstances under which the garrison came under fierce and concentrated attack. The minister, however, gave the house the strength of the garrison at Mullaittivu at the time of the attack on 17 July, 1996 as: Sri Lanka Army — 1,268 personnel, Sri Lanka Navy — nine, Sri Lanka Police — 49, and civilians — 81. The minister described how suicide cadres first attacked the camp and they were followed by waves and waves of other LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] squads and it was a do or die battle for the LTTE. It was their strategy meant to divert the government troops, but it failed because when the Sathjaya Operation began from the south, the LTTE were caught napping. They never expected our troops to attack their stronghold in the South and that was the aim of Sathjaya Operation, which is now on its way to Kilinochchi.

Sri Lanka: Minister Rejects Charges of Discrimination Against Tamils

BK0808130496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There is no discrimination against Tamils in the country nor is there any danger to their lives, Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar told foreign media personnel recently. He was responding to a question raised by a member of the group of 72 travel media writers from 22 countries, who were in Sri Lanka. They were in the island on a program organized by the Ceylon Tourist Board on destination Sri Lanka, educational tour for travel media personnel. The meeting was held to find out their impressions on Sri Lanka. At the opening session, a member raised the question as to the exact truth of the claims made by the Tamil youths overseas who complain that they were discriminated against due to fact that they were Tamils and their lives were in danger. Minister Kadirgamar in his reply said that they make these complaints so that they could seek political asylum in foreign lands. They are, in actual fact, economic refugees and now the West has come to realize that there is no truth at all in their claims and the false impression they try to create.

Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister and Deputy Finance Minister G.L. Peiris responding to another question said that the Sri Lanka Government had not ignored the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], but if they show willingness to negotiate with the government, the LTTE should first agree to lay down a substantial portion of their arms. He also pointed out that (?because) of the war and other obstacles, it is difficult to narrow down the economic disparity.

Sri Lanka: Sri Lankan Media Slams President Over Ban Threat

BK0808143796 Hong Kong AFP in English 1348 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Aug 8 (AFP) — A Sri Lankan media organisation Thursday [8

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August] lambasted President Chandrika Kumaratunga for threatening to ban privately owned newspapers and television stations.

The Free Media Movement (FMM) said it was outraged by Kumaratunga's remarks at a public meeting over the weekend that she will not hesitate to close down news organisations that she considers "irresponsible."

"The FMM is committed to a responsible non-partisan reporting of the news, " the FMM said in a two-page statement. "Not all the Presidents' threats and phony populist claims can deter this determination."

The media outfit also called for "vigilance at all levels" to prevent the President using her executive powers to muzzle the press, as was done by the previous United National Party government voted out in 1994.

Kumaratunga had said that several newspapers had bypassed the government censor and published reports and pictures from the ongoing battle between the military and Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

"We have warned and cautioned them several times to be more responsible... Our soldiers have complained about this irresponsible reporting," the President said.

"The freedom we gave them is being used like the freedom of the wild ass," the President said.

Since becoming President nearly two years ago with the support of local media, Kumaratunga has consistently accused the press of working against her and imposed censorship on the reporting of the island's protracted ethnic war.

Last month, a pro-government newspaper accused the country's main intelligence agency of tapping phones of local journalists and foreign correspondents based here.

Sri Lanka: Opposition Leader Says UNP Was Not Promoting Cause of LTTE

BK0808144796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremasinge has called for the establishment of joint operational headquarters to coordinate an offensive against the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. Mr. Wickremasinge told parliament today that this will also enable the security forces to respond rapidly and efficiently to various crisis situation. Taking part in the debate on another extension of the emergency, he said that the enormous cost of the war has made peace even more important.

Referring to the Mullaittivu incident, the opposition leader called on the government to rethink its military strategy. He stressed that the UNP [United National Party] was not engaging in any kind of activities that would promote the cause of the terrorists. Mr. Wickremasinge expressed his appreciation of Deputy Defense Minister General Anuruddha Ratwatte's decision to launch investigation into the attack on the Mullaittivu camp.

Sri Lanka: Army Offensive Called 'War of Revenge' Against Tamils

BK0808163696 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in English 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the Sri Lankan war on the Tamil homeland, the Sinhala dominated Sri Lankan armed forces have been deliberately attacking Tamil civilian centres. The air force bombers are flying far way from the theatre of operation to bomb civilian targets. Bombs are being dropped on civilian centres, refugee settlements and places of worship where people have taken refugee.

It is a war of revenge on the Tamil people for the government's recent military defeat. The Sri Lankan armed forces have destroyed the once flourishing Tamil town of Kilinochchi where nearly 200,000 people lived. What has been destroyed are the precious lives of Tamil civilians and their property. The town's hospital, the Central college, the offices of ICRC [International Committee for the Red Cross], the Murugan Temple, the public offices and the commercial centre have been destroyed by the armed forces.

The 200,000 people who lived and worked in the Town and its suburbs have been driven out by the military forces who shelled the area day and night. The displaced people have nowhere to go and majority of them are living along roadsides and in the nearby jungles. The displaced are facing starvation as the Sri Lankan military authorities have blocked the lorries which were carrying food and medicine for the displaced.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Pins Down Troops, Army Claims 300 Rebels Dead

BK0808113596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1109 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Aug 8 (AFP) — Heavy long-range battles raged in northern Sri Lanka for the fifth consecutive day Thursday [8 August] as Tamil guerrillas kept up a ferocious counter-attack to defend their political headquarters, the military said.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fired mortar bombs, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms to slow down a military advance on the town

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of Kilinochchi, military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said.

He said the Tiger guerrillas had named the 182 cadres killed in the latest wave of fighting which erupted on Sunday [4 August], but the military estimate for the rebel losses was more than 300 killed.

"There is a lot of fighting going on today," Munasinghe told reporters here. "Our troops have now moved within a kilometre (mile) of the outskirts of Kilinochchi."

Munasinghe denied Tiger claims that the town of Kilinochchi, the new political headquarters of the Tigers, had been razed by intense aerial and artillery attacks carried out by the security forces.

The army lost a total of 48 soldiers killed and 67 seriously wounded in the past five days, Munasinghe told reporters here, adding that the aim of the military was to draw out the Tigers and kill them.

"We are losing men no doubt," he said. "Our objective is to draw as many terrorists as possible and kill them with the least amount of casualties to us. We are achieving that through the latest offensive."

The Tigers in a statement from their London office said they were resisting the military onslaught and gave their casualties as 51 killed. The rebels say they have killed more than 100 government troops.

On Wednesday [7 August], deputy defence minister Anuruddha Ratwatte said the Tigers were fleeing the military onslaught but the guerrillas maintained that they were defending the town despite all its buildings being damaged.

Ratwatte, who is responsible for the government's drive against the LTTE, said the army was moving towards Kilinochchi and claimed that the Tigers were on the run.

"We are on the way to Kilinochchi and the LTTE cadres have already started running away into the jungles," Ratwatte said while admitting that more than 700 soldiers died when Tigers smashed an army garrison elsewhere last month.

The battle for Kilinochchi is regarded by many as a prestige issue for both sides. Having lost the key garrison of Mullaitivu in the island's north-east last month, the government was determined to salvage troop morale.

However, Kilinochchi for the Tigers is the last bastion after having been driven out of their former citadel of Jaffna, further to the north, following a series of military operations begun last October.

Shortly after the Mullaitivu defeat, the worst suffered by Sri Lankan security forces in the decades-old Tamil separatist war, the military mounted its operation code-named "true victory" to take Kilinochchi.

The LTTE was showering automatic weapons fire and mortar bombs against security forces battling to capture Kilinochchi and some 200,000 civilians in the area had already fled to safer areas further south, officials said.

"The terrorists are throwing everything they have into this battle," a defence ministry spokesman here said. "Progress of ground troops has been slow because of very heavy resistance.

Sri Lanka: Spokesman Details Latest Fighting, Causality Figures

BK0908013696 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 9 Aug 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Heavy fighting was reported from the outskirts of Kilinochchi town on Thursday [8 August] as soldiers engaged in the Sathjaya offensive retaliated against Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) mortar and RPG attacks, Military Spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe said.

He told the weekly press briefing that soldiers, backed by tanks, artillery and air cover, were about one kilometre away from the Kilinochchi city limits and nearly eight km from Elephant Pass as the operation entered its 14th day.

"The troops are facing heavy LTTE resistance and removing anti-tank and anti-personnel mines," he said. He said the LTTE has announced the Tiger death toll as 182 — "but we believe it should be higher, like 300. And that's without considering air and artillery attacks".

Three officers and 45 soldiers have been killed so far during this military drive. Sixty-seven soldiers have been wounded.

The airforce continues to support the ground troops with direct hits on identified LTTE targets, Brigadier Munasinghe said. A newly-built LTTE base in Murugandi, south of Kilinochchi, suffered heavy damage as a result of aerial attacks.

"Our aim is to draw and kill the terrorists and we are very happy if they keep coming towards us. Then we can fight them directly".

Operation Sathjaya was launched on July 26 from Elephant Pass. The troops soon captured the strategic town of Paranthan, from which the second phase of the operation was launched on August 4.

Journalist: Are civilians fleeing Kilinochchi?

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Brigadier: They may have left towards Mullaitivu or elsewhere. Or the Tigers could have forced them to leave.

Q: Is the army not allowing food lorries to go towards Kilinochchi?

A: The army is not involved with that. However, the actual situation is that the lorries which have gone beyond Vavuniya have not returned — the LTTE is not releasing the lorries. The owners are very anxious to know the fate of their lorries and reluctant to send the other lorries away. So those lorries have to come back to send additional lorries.

In another incident, a Tiger boat was destroyed by a naval vessel on Tuesday [6 August] off the coast of Mullaitivu.

Two Grama Niladharis and another civilians have been abducted by suspected LTTE cadres in Pottuvil on Wednesday [7 August].

Sri Lanka: Tigers Blast Japan-Bound Cargo, Appeal for Foreign Help

BK0908103696 Hong Kong AFP in English 1025 GMT 9 Aug 96

[Report by Amal Jayasinghe]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Aug 9 (AFP) — Tamil guerrillas Friday [9 August] attacked a Japan-bound foreign merchant vessel in Sri Lanka and killed eight more soldiers while calling for international help to end fighting, officials said.

The Philippine-registered M. V. Princess Wave was loading a cargo of ilmenite at the mineral sands factory in the northeastern port town of Pulmoddai when it was attacked, shipping officials said.

They said the 21 Filipino crew were unhurt but seven local dock workers were wounded in the explosion which blew a hole in the 20,000-tonne vessel, local officials at the nearby port town of Trincomalee said.

The Sri Lankan Navy rushed gunboats to the area and were helping tow the crippled cargo ship to Trincomalee, 257 kilometres (160 miles) northeast of here, for repairs, officials said.

The Defence Ministry said the Tigers used an underwater explosive device to attack the ship which had been loaded with about 13,000 tonnes of ilmenite for a Japanese consignee.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) overran a military garrison at Mullaitivu, further north of the mineral sands facility at Pulmoddai last month, and killed some 1,300 government soldiers.

Shortly after the attack, Tigers ambushed an army patrol in Trincomalee, killing eight soldiers and wounding six others for the loss of at least one of their own fighters, officials said.

The stepped up violence came as the Tigers called for international help to end a military onslaught against their political headquarters at the northern town of Kilinochchi and said some 200,000 civilians were facing starvation.

"The international community should prevail on the Sri Lankan government to stop its aggression which brings about short term and long term disasters to the Tamil people," the LTTE said in a statement from its London office.

It said more than 30 civilians had died in the ongoing army drive against Kilinochchi where Tiger fighters have put up stiff resistance in the past six days. Civilians have already fled the area to other rebel-held areas.

Tigers said the refugees were faced with starvation but military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said the guerrillas were to blame. Munasinghe said the Tigers were blocking trucks coming into a government-held town to take back food.

Trucks carrying food and other essentials to rebel-held areas of the island's north are stopped at a de facto frontier post where the goods are loaded onto vehicles returning from Tiger controlled areas.

The scheme had been in operation to prevent the Tigers sending back vehicles rigged up with explosives to the south of the country since a drive-by truck bombing killed 91 people at the Central Bank here in January.

The Defence Ministry said fighting raged in the area for the sixth straight day Friday as the Tigers kept up a fierce counterattack to defend the town of Kilinochchi where they have established their political headquarters.

Government troops had moved within a kilometre (half mile) of the outer limits of Kilinochchi, spokesman Munasinghe said denying Tiger claims that the town had been razed by intense aerial and artillery attacks.

The army has lost a total of 49 soldier killed and 70 seriously wounded in the past six days, Munasinghe said adding that the aim of the military was to draw out Tigers and kill them.

"We are losing men no doubt," he said. "Our objective is to draw as many terrorists as possible and kill them with the least amount of casualties to us. We are achieving that through the latest offensive."

The Tigers said they were resisting the military onslaught and gave their casualties as 51 killed. The rebels say they have killed more than 100 government troops.

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